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The Moth and the Flame

BY
CLYDE FITCH



ALICE KAUSER

1402 Broadway . . . New York City



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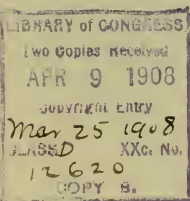
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~~and CLYDE FITCH.~~

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TMP92-009287

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

EDWARD FLETCHER

MR. DAWSON

MR. WOLTON

DOUGLAS RHODES

JOHNSTONE

FANSHAW

TRIMMINS

CLERGYMAN

HOWES

MARION WOLTON

MRS. LORRIMER

MRS. WOLTON

JEANETTE GROSS

ETHEL

KITTY

GERTRUDE

BLANCHE

MAID

MRS. FLETCHER

Guests, Bridesmaids, Choristers, Servants and others.

ACT I

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Wolton. At Home, Tuesday Evening, January , at ten o'clock. Children's Costumes de rigueur. East 69th St., N. Y.

ACT II

One year later. Mrs. Lawrence Wolton requests the honor of your presence at the Marriage of her Daughter Marion to Mr. Edward Houghton Fletcher, Thursday, February 10, at five o'clock, St. Hubert's Chapel, New York.

ACT III

The Following Day. The Library at the Woltons.

ACT I

Dark Oak and Green. Reception Room. Hung with Dark Green Draperies and Old Portraits. Gilt Furniture, Palms and Bric-a-Brac.

LIGHTS—Foot, Sidelights, Chandelier and first Border on full until "Very well, sir." Then first Border, Chandelier and Sidelights off. (*This is a different arrangement from printed Plot but bound to answer better.*)

SIDE PROPERTIES—Hoop and stick; sheet of music; ETHEL, off R. 1. E. Music racks, ETHEL, off R. 2. E. Small jingle bell, off R. 2. E. to ring up mimic curtain. Lamb, crook, trumpet, Mrs. LORRIMER. Black rag baby, (FANSHAW, R. 2. E.) Favors, drums, etc., Mrs. WOLTON. Small bouquet for BLANCHE. Jumping rope for GERTRUDE. Ball toy, KITTY. Large ball for TRIMMINS. Scarfs for dance. These made of tarleton, 18 in. wide, 8 ft. long. Favors, doll for TRIMMINS. Monkey, JOHNSTONE, also cigarette case, cigarettes and matches. c. to L. Two round tables with cloths and silver (*to seat 4 each*) off c. to L. Two trays with 4 cups and saucers each with bouillon. Two trays with 4 plates of cakes each. Two trays with 4 punch glasses on one end and 5 on other. Ice cream. Four champagne glasses on table (*up stage*). Five champagne glasses brought on to lower table. Two champagne bottles wrapped in napkins. Champagne or substitute. Off R. 2. E. One Bentwood chair for FANSHAW. Heavy padded log to represent fall of body.

DISPOSITION OF CHARACTERS AT RISE OF CURTAIN—DOUGLAS, Mrs. LORRIMER, FLETCHER, ready off c to R. ETHEL ready off R. 2. E.

COSTUMES—MARION WOLTON, Empire Child's, Pink. MRS. LORRIMER, Watteau Shepherdess, Blue and White. MRS. WOLTON, Queen Elizabeth, Green and Gold. ETHEL, 1840 Child, White and Green. KITTY, Modern Child, Pale Green. BLANCHE, Brittany Child, Blue. GERTRUDE, Grey Organdie over Yellow Modern, BESSIE, Colored Giro. LADY GUESTS, 1830 Blue and Yellow Satin Pantelettes. Italian Child, Scotch Lassie, Spanish Girl, Red Riding Hood, Swiss Peasant, Modern Child—white swiss with hood and socks. KATE GREEN-A-WAY, (White.) FLETCHER, Boy's Evening Dress. DOUGLAS RHODES, White Sailor Suit. FANSHAW, Black Velvet Lord Fauntleroy. JOHNSTONE, White Duck Kilt Suit. (*Pantelettes and Socks.*) (*Red bow on head.*) TRIMMINS, Fauntleroy Riding Suit. GENTLEMEN GUESTS, Neapolitan Boy, French Soldier, Hunting Costume, Eaton Boy, French Peasant, Dutch Peasant sailor, Swiss, Charles II.

ACT I

SCENE—*The First Act takes place in the WOLTONS' house during a large fancy ball. All the guests are in children's costumes—that being insisted upon in the invitations. The Stage represents a reception room. The end of a conservatory, or ball room, being seen, through a large archway. In R. U. corner of the stage is a small stage built with curtains and foot lights, for an amateur vaudeville performance, which is taking place.*

(*At rise of curtain the room is filled with guests in costume, on chairs before improvised stage and the curtain of stage is just falling, as one of the Lady Guests—who, dressed (and blacked) as a small Darky Girl, has been singing a popular negro ballad ("Warmest Baby.") The mimic curtain rises again, owing to the applause of the mimic audience. The chorus of song is repeated and the curtain again falls to applause. There is a general movement among guests—with laughter and conversation.*)

DISCOVERED—MARION WOLTON, dressed in Empire Child's gown, is sitting in one of the third row of chairs next the foot-lights. Up to now her back is partly turned toward the audience. KITTY RAND, dressed in short skirts, is just behind her.

FANSHAW—(*leaning over to MARION*) I think, Marion, this was really a most amusing idea of yours, having us all come as children.

(*Enter DOUGLAS RHODES, c. r., sailor costume, white. He meets MRS. WOLTON up c. MRS WOLTON enters c. l. They talk.*)

MARION—(*to KITTY*) Your costume, Kitty, is charming.

KITTY—(with a ball on rubber cord) My dear, I'm sure I look a sight. I feel as if it were bathing hour at Narragansett.

MARION—Here's Bessie. How splendid she was. (*Rises*). (*Enter BESSIE, R. 1 E. She laughs as she is greeted by shouts of laughter and applause by guests. She joins MARION, who shakes her hand*) You were too funny, Bessie. (*a guest rises and offers seat to BESSIE. She accepts it and sits*)

JOHNSTONE—(*Monkey*) (*White kilt suit*) (*to BESSIE as she sits*) Yes. Isn't this an awfully lovely party? (*to FANSHAW*) Here, Fanshaw, it's your turn.

GUESTS AND ALL—Yes, come on Fanshaw, etc. (*FANSHAW exists R. 1 E.*) (*RHODES comes from Mrs. WOLTON nodding pleasantly to guests as he passes round behind them, to MARION. He shakes her hand*)

MARION—Why so late, Douglas?

DOUGLAS—I was dining with Mrs. Lorrimer; but I hope you've saved me a seat by you. (*BLANCHE exits, ready for stage, R. C.*)

MARION—I'm sorry, but I haven't. There's the curtain. (*She sits and DOUGLAS takes a place back of guests, shaking hands with TRIMMINS as he does so*) (*Business*) (*Mimic curtain rises, music begins, all interrupt with "Sh-h."*) *FANSHAW enters on mimic stage dressed as Little Lord Fauntleroy and sings. Mimic curtain falls to applause. Curtain is raised. Black rag baby thrown to him during song. FANSHAW enters, bows, and as he does so, BLANCHE throws a small bouquet of flowers to him. This he catches and makes entrance upon stage by jumping over mimic foot-lights. He is congratulated and thanked by MARION and resumes his seat*)

MUSIC BEGINS—(*All interrupt again with "Sh-h."*) *Curtain is raised and enter ETHEL, dressed as a child of 1840 in white and green. She comes forward and sings (Henrietta) with orchestral accompaniment, a flute obligato being a feature of the latter, which, every little while indulges in loud variations, entirely drowning the singer's voice, much to her annoyance, and the only half-suppressed amusement of the guests. As she reaches the chorus all (at MARION's suggestion) join in with her and finish the song.*) (*MARION rises, giving the signal that the entertainment is over.*) (*Servants come in and take away most of the chairs, leaving one in centre of stage and three up L. C.*) (*All rise and form groups—those of guests near the door move into ball room and off R.*) (*ETHEL enters R. 1 E., and MARION at once greets her. KITTY and JOHNSTONE joining them*)

MARION—(c). Thank you ever so much.

JOHNSTONE—Yes, indeed. Isn't this an awfully lovely party.

ETHEL—(R.) (*with large hoop and stick*) (*quickly, much put out*) My dear Marion, I could choke that flute player.

MARION—Don't be selfish, Ethel, the man wanted to be heard. (*goes up to DOUGLAS she meets DOUGLAS up c.*)

ETHEL—If I were a witch I'd curse him with asthma. Mr. Johnstone, go and curse him for me.

JOHNSTONE—With pleasure.

ETHEL—Just give him a piece of my mind. (*enter girl L. U. E.*)

JOHNSTONE—(*flatteringly*) He doesn't deserve such a gift. But isn't this a lovely party? Will you excuse me? (*he goes up stage to BLANCHE, offers his arm, which she takes, and they exit c. to R. KITTY and ETHEL watch BLANCHE and JOHNSTONE, amused*)

KITTY—(*to ETHEL*) Just look at Blanche. Do you suppose she's going to—

ETHEL—She's going to with all her might and main, if he will only ask her.

KITTY—A large if— (*laughing*) (*FANSHAW and GERTRUDE join ETHEL and KITTY down stage R.*)

FANSHAW—Looks as if Johnny were getting pretty stuck on Blanche, doesn't it? (*goes to KITTY c. TRIMMINS moves up c.*)

ETHEL—Yes, or just the other way round. (*all laugh*)

GERTRUDE—Who are you dancing the cotillon with, Ethel?

ETHEL—Don't know. I've promised two men but I haven't made up my mind who I'll dance with yet.

FANSHAW—A nice person to engage for a partner. (*calling*) Trimmins!

ETHEL—Sh-h! He's one of the men I've promised.

FANSHAW—(*laughing*) Never mind. I'm the other. (*all laugh. GERTRUDE says "Oh, ETHEL!" GERTRUDE goes toward MARION. ETHEL and KITTY at some time.*) (*MARION exists R.*)

FANSHAW—(*to TRIMMINS down L.*) Who are you dancing the cotillon with, Trimmins?

TRIMMINS—(*L.*) Ethel Stevens!

FANSHAW—(*c.*) Who?

TRIMMINS—Ethel Stevens!

FANSHAW—I'll bet a fiver you're not. She's dancing with me.

TRIMMINS—(*very pleased*) Delighted! I owe you the five with joy. (*pushes FANSHAW out of the way. Crossing to GERTRUDE*) Will you give me the pleasure. (*DOUGLAS out at back. DOUGLAS exists L.*)

TRIMMINS—Thank you. (*offers his arm, which GERTRUDE takes and they go out at back*)

FANSHAW—Well!

MARION—Are you going to stand perfectly still and be robbed in that manner? (*laughing*)

FANSHAW—Well, but what am I— (*interrupted by one*)

of the girl guests, who says, "I'm here!") Oh, so you are. (*puts his arm in hers and they run off together*) (MARION *exits up c.*)

ETHEL—Marion, isn't Mr. Ned Fletcher coming to-night?

MARION—Yes. (*exit c. to L.*)

KITTY—I'm so glad, he's quite the most amusing man in town this winter. (*sitting on chair R. c. which servant left*)

ETHEL—And so many people won't ask him to their houses, you know. Mamma won't.

KITTY—Well, you know, your mother's a ridiculous person, she asks lots of awfully fast men!

ETHEL—Yes, but they are all relatives.

KITTY—(*putting arm around ETHEL, pricks her finger*) I don't believe Ned Fletcher is as bad as people hint. He's too good looking. (*fixing dress*)

ETHEL—And I don't care whether he's bad or not, he's charming enough to make up for it. Besides I suppose all men are bad.

KITTY—O—I don't know.

ETHEL—I mean all nice men. (*ready music*)

KITTY—Where has Mr. Fletcher been before this winter.

ETHEL—My dear, he's one of those men who live all over the place—most of the time in Europe, but he's been here always off and on—and in Newport and in Lenox he has yachts and things, don't you know! (*exits down R.*)

MARION—(*enters c.*) Girls, will you go into the ball room, till the men get the tables ready here? (*she speaks aside to one of the servants and exits L. 2 E.*) (*Servants bring on small table and place it R. with bottles, lunch, etc., a broken glass covered with napkin to fall on stage. Place 7 chairs about table. Exit R. 1 E.*)

ETHEL—Of course. (*to KITTY*) (*crossing to her*) Do you notice how she won't talk about Fletcher and won't listen to any one else either?

KITTY—My dear, she's heels over head.

ETHEL—Poor Douglas Rhodes! (*half smiling, in part satire*)

KITTY—Serves him right for hanging around her all his life! Why didn't he flirt with one of us girls for a time, if only to make her jealous! (*ETHEL sees DOUGLAS enter and tries to warn KITTY*) (*ETHEL gives KITTY a violent pull of the arm to warn her to stop speaking of DOUGLAS*)

ETHEL (*R.*) (*to DOUGLAS*) You can't stay here, we're driven out.

KITTY—Come, help us make fun of the other people.

DOUGLAS—In a few minutes. I must give you a chance to make fun of me!

KITTY—O, we've been doing that for years! (*ETHEL blows DOUGLAS' whistle which he has suspended from neck, she pull-*

ing it out of his pocket) (ETHEL and KITTY smile coquettishly at DOUGLAS and exit at B. into ball room arm in arm) (Distant music off stage) (DOUGLAS follows up c.) (A pause) (Enter MARION L. 2 E.) (DOUGLAS up stage, looking admiringly at her, and smiling. Then smiling and putting himself into a boyish attitude, he says boyishly)

DOUGLAS—Hello, Molly!

MARION—(smiling back, catching his mood, speaks girlishly) Hello, Dug! It does take one back to old days, doesn't it! (down L.)

DOUGLAS—(down c.) That was what I was thinking of, Marion, the days of dancing school. How good you were to always be my partner, even though I couldn't reverse without treading on your toes!

MARION—(smiling) You were a bad dancer—and death to slippers. (crosses R.)

DOUGLAS—(L. c.) And the children's parties with the old games, "Post Office," "Copenhagen," "Kiss in the Ring."

MARION—(smiling mischievously) You were good enough at "Kiss in the Ring" to make up for your not reversing.

DOUGLAS—(with real sentiment, crosses to her) Do you remember it all as well as I do?

MARION—(realizing his sentiment, and trying to change their mood, but pleasantly) Of course I do! We were great friends then, as we are now, and as I hope we always will be Douglas.

DOUGLAS—But if we played the old games again, would it be the same?

MARION—No, no, things are never the same.

DOUGLAS—But would you let me choose you always? (crosses to her) Would you pretend not to see me coming so I could slap your hands on the Copenhagen rope and take my reward? If we played "Post Office," would I have all my letters from your lips! Would you mind if in "bow to the wittiest, kneel to the prettiest, and kiss the one you loved best," I choose you again, openly, for all three? Would you give me all your dances?

MARION—(more serious, though still smiling kindly, sweetly) That's just it Douglas! You can reverse now, and there are so many other girls wanting partners!

DOUGLAS—But—— (interrupted)

MARION—Besides after all, we're only children outside tonight, our hearts have come of age!

DOUGLAS—Yes, Marion, but, boy's and man's, my heart's the same. I want the same partner I did then, only I want her, for the game of life!

MARION—I am so sorry!

DOUGLAS—Sorry? Then you won't let your hands lie on the rope for me any more?

MARION—I am very fond of you, Douglas, and I always was, but— (*she hesitates*)

DOUGLAS—(*a little bitterly, disappointed*) I know what you mean. (*crosses R.*) I was all right for dancing school, but life is a more serious matter— (*MARION to chair C. sits down*) I know I'm not like you, Marion—I know what an intellectual woman you are, and what an ordinary sort of fellow I am. But I love you! and I hoped— (*crosses L. C. He breaks off and continues with his first idea*) You went to a woman's college, and I only to a man's—You made a study of sociology—I, (*smiling*) principally of athletics. I know I never read books, and you seem to read everything. But I love you. You have your clubs for working girls, your charities, I know the busy helpful life you lead. You have 'so much in it,, I was in hopes that what room was left for a husband was so little even I could fill it. And somehow or other I've always taken it for granted you more or less understood, and were—willing.

MARION—I was—once—

DOUGLAS—You were?

MARION—There was no one in the world I liked so much to be with as you, and I think I, too, believed my happiness was in your hands, and that some day we would decide together it was so. But I lately (*she hesitates*)

DOUGLAS—Some one else?—

MARION—I don't like you one bit less Douglas, only— (*rises*)

DOUGLAS—Only you liked some one else more! I was afraid so, I've heard whispers and guesses—

MARION—Don't let it make any difference with *us*, Douglas!

DOUGLAS—You love him?

MARION—(*C.*) Yes.

DOUGLAS—Very much?

MARION—You see every one is against him, and I feel that I have a chance to save him.

DOUGLAS—You believe in him?

MARION—(*shortly*) Yes.

DOUGLAS—Would you believe anything against him?

MARION—(*on the defensive, indignant*) No?

DOUGLAS—If some one told you of something dishonorable this man had done.

MARION—I would suspect the motive of the person who told me. Do you think I haven't heard plenty of gossip against him? Every girl I know has done her best to take away his character, and begged me to introduce him to her in the same breath.

DOUGLAS—And if *I* spoke against him?

MARION—(*leaning on back of chair*) I know I couldn't help it, after what you have told me, I should have to feel you might be influenced by jealousy.

DOUGLAS—To *unjustly* accuse a man?

MARION—O, Douglas, no, of course you would believe what you said, but I wouldn't trust your judgment. Don't I know every one is down on him. (*down a little*) Even you men—are all the men in New York so proud of their past lives—not to mention the *present* of several I know—Well if men turn a cold shoulder then we women must give him our hands. (*up c.*)

DOUGLAS—(*c.*) You girls don't understand.

MARION—(*r. c.*) O, girls understand a good deal nowadays. Society and some of the newspapers attend to that. He doesn't pretend to be a saint to me—I find him perfectly frank—and I am afraid he has been rather fast! But I don't believe he is capable of an outright dishonorable action, and nothing would make me believe it!

DOUGLAS—No proof?

MARION—Only the proof of my own eyes. When I see him do something contemptible, then I'll believe *half* the stories I hear of him! (*up c. a little*)

DOUGLAS—I see you *do* love him.

MARION—I do, though you are the only person I have confessed it to, not even to him—and forgive me, (*down a little*) but I never liked you less than I do now when you have spoken against him. (*up to arch*)

DOUGLAS—(*following her c.*) (*r. of MARION*) No, tell me you will forget it, and keep me the same old friend, and I'll promise not to speak against him to you again.

MARION—(*smiling*) Very well—— (*they shake hands*) Why, I want you two to be the best of friends—you *must* be——

DOUGLAS—(*also smiling*) O, I don't promise that—I haven't given you up yet, and I shan't until——

MARION—(*smiling*) When——?

DOUGLAS—(*smiling*) Until I see you going into the church to be married.

MARION—You'll say nothing more against Ned?

DOUGLAS—Not to you. (*down r. c.*)

MARION—O, but you will to others? (*follows*)

DOUGLAS—I will say what I have to say to—*him*.

MARION—To *him*? (*enter MRS. WOLTON and FLETCHER.*) (*FLETCHER is dressed in dark sailor clothes*)

MRS. W.—Marion, here's another little boy. (*MARION turns and greets FLETCHER, going to him. DOUGLAS and FLETCHER*

see each other and say "Good evening" pleasantly. MRS. W. comes down L. MARION and FLETCHER C.)

MARION—(R. C.) It's too bad you missed the vaudeville.

FLETCHER—Did you do anything.

MARION—(Laughing) (Exit FLETCHER and MARION C.) (DOUGLAS turns around quickly, annoyed, to speak to MRS. WOLTON, but in his quick turning and in his movement of annoyance, keeping his eyes on MARION and FLETCHER, he has struck glasses and a bottle on the little supper table beside them. They crash on the floor. He and MRS. WOLTON both start)

DOUGLAS—O! Mrs. Wolton, forgive me, how clumsy! (starts to pick up)

MRS. W.—No, never mind. (as enter servant) Here is Howes— (to servant) Howes, see to this please, at once.

SERVANT—(during bus.) Yes, m'm. Please Mr. Dawson is here to see Mr. Wolton.

MRS. W.—Mr. Dawson, my brother! Why he's in Boston, Howes.

SERVANT—Beg pardon m'm, but he must have returned today. Most important he says m'm, where shall I show him? The ladies and gentlemen are playing "Blind Man's Buff" in Mr. Wolton's room.

MRS. W.—This is the quietest place. Show Mr. Dawson in here. Where is Mr. Wolton?

SERVANT—(trying not to smile) He's blind-folded, m'm!

MRS. W.—(smiling) Tell him.

SERVANT—Yes m'm. (exits at R. 1 E.)

DOUGLAS—Shall we join the game?

MRS. W.—Yes, come, I will take Mr. Wolton's place! I haven't played Blind Man's Buff for— (she calculates a moment, and then speaks amusedly) Good gracious!—never mind how many years!!

DOUGLAS—O, not so many as all that, I am sure! (they go out at back) (Enter servant R. 1 E. with DAWSON in cutaway coat and usual vest and trousers) (Servant at once begins to pick up the debris made by DOUGLAS)

DAWSON—What's going on here, Howes?

SERVANT—A children's party, sir.

DAWSON—A what?

HOWES—A children's party, sir.

DAWSON—Who are the children?

SERVANT—Mr. Wolton and Miss Wolton, sir, and her friends. Mr. Wolton's playing games now, sir, but he said he would join you in a minute.

DAWSON—(out loud involuntarily, but speaking to himself—very seriously almost tragically) Playing games! My God!

SERVANT—Yes, sir—one don't know what rich folks'll do

next sir. *We're in hopes in the kitchen they'll take no pretending they're the servants, sir, and turn us loose in the ball room.* (*smiling—exits c. to r.*)

DAWSON—(*who hardly hears servant*) Playing games, with ruin and disgrace staring him in the face. (*enter Mr. WOLTON c. from r.*)

MR. W.—(*who enters flushed and gay—an elderly man in knickerbockers and evening coat, a sort of English Court costume. The handkerchief which was tied around his eyes in the game, has slipped and lies about his neck*) Well, Fred, what's the good news?

DAWSON—The worst there could be!

MR. W.—(*who enters flushed and gay—an elderly man in half whispers*) What do you mean!!

DAWSON—(*dragging off the Blind Man's Buff handkerchief from WOLTON's neck*) What do you mean by going in for all this tomfoolery to-night with ruin and disgrace ready for you in the morning?

MR. W.—So soon——?

DAWSON—How much longer did you think you could stave it off?

MR. W.—(*sinks exhausted into a chair*) I didn't know.

DAWSON—Why didn't you tell me your credit was as exhausted in Boston as here? (*taking chair from table r. and sitting r. of Wolton*)

MR. W.—I thought with you doing the negotiating it mightn't be!

DAWSON—Well it is; do you hear me, you haven't any such thing as *credit there* nor *here!* nor anywhere for aught I know! To-morrow is the last day of grace, your sister-in-law has to pay this money?

MR. W.—Yes.

DAWSON—What did you let her buy that house for?

MR. W.—(*testily*) How could I help it! My brother didn't appoint me her guardian! He simply left her money in trust in my hands!

DAWSON—"In trust in your hands!" (*laughs cruelly*)

MR. W.—Don't do that!

DAWSON—And you speculated with it, and lost every cent!

MR. W.—Yes.

DAWSON—What a scoundrel you are! (*WOLTON squirms miserably in his chair, DAWSON adds quietly*) And yet I don't suppose there's at this moment a more popular man in New York, socially, than you.

MR. W.—No, I don't believe there is!—but a damned lot of good it does me!

DAWSON—Will your sister-in-law accept her ruin quietly?

MR. W.—No, she's never liked me, she'll take pleasure in exposing me!

DAWSON—But for you *wife* and *child's* sake!

MR. W.—You know very well she *hates them!* They have never taken her up; she wasn't possible socially. (DAWSON *laughs again bitterly*) *Don't do that!*

DAWSON—Well then after ruining yourself and your brother's wife, you must ruin your *own!*

MR. W.—(*alarmed, uneasy*) What do you mean?

DAWSON—I mean that my sister's own money is enough to pay for your sister's silence. Don't you understand? Your sister mustn't know of course, that you've stolen her fortune. Instead, your wife must be told,—poor Laura—and for her daughter's sake, she must consent to beggar herself. Her bonds will about meet the payment of the house to-morrow—they must be sold the first thing—I will see to it,— (*as he speaks, he is looking WOLTON straight in the face. Something in WOLTON's face which grows upon him with conviction as he speaks his last few words. He breaks off suddenly*) What! you've taken hers too! (*He leans over WOLTON in the chair, his hands on his shoulders, close to his neck, in a rage*) (*Rises*) You've beggared my sister, your wife and child! You— (*interrupted*)

MR. W.—(*with a big effort, rises, throwing off DAWSON's hands*) Sh!—For God's sake lower your voice! You'll be heard!

DAWSON—(*with a change of tone, but speaking with utter contempt*) By a couple hundred fools! To-morrow thousands will hear of your dirty dishonor!! (*going R. a little*)

MR. W.—(*to DAWSON*) But you, you have money—won't you come to my rescue?

DAWSON—I couldn't if I would. You have borrowed half a fortune of me already. What I have left must go to take care of my sister and niece. Do you think I'd support *you!* No, the *State* will do that.

MR. W.—That!! You'd let me go to—?

DAWSON—You'll get twenty years at least!

MR. W.—You won't help me *escape?*

DAWSON—No.

MR. W.—But Laura? she loves me, and Marion. *They* will suffer for me; I may be weakly dishonorable, but I've always loved them and they me. Besides any public dishonor which comes to my name, must touch theirs too.

DAWSON—I'm not so sure about that—I think there is material for a divorce here.

MR. W.—A divorce! My God, must I lose everything! Show a little pity Fred! Remember the old days at school, was I a bad boy? We were chums for years, you know it!—

You were my best man when I married Laura, and you were the gayest at the wedding! It's only been this curse of gambling with the stocks that has driven me to the devil,—that and my cursed luck!

DAWSON—*Luck has nothing to do with honor.*

MR. W.—You don't know—oftener than you think, it has everything! (*enter servant R.*)

SERVANT—Supper is ready, sir, can we have this room?

DAWSON—Yes, Howes, I'm going! (*goes R.*)

SERVANT—Thank you, sir. (*exits R.*)

MR. W.—Give me a word of hope, Fred!—something—What are you going to do?

DAWSON—Nothing till to-morrow morning.

MR. W.—And that's all you have to say?

DAWSON—All. (*The two men stand looking at each other a moment in a sort of grim embarrassment, then DAWSON exits R. 1 E.*) (*Music ppp.*) (*It must be evident to the audience, though not to the hysterically excited WOLTON, that DAWSON has a little, a very little pity, but doesn't wish to show it, at any rate not yet.*) (*WOLTON who has stood a moment lost in thought, an expression of despair in his face, shudders and comes to himself. He looks around to see that he is alone. He grasps his forehead tight a moment in his right hand, drops his hand and with compressed lips nods his head determinedly. He is standing by one of the smaller supper tables, he looks down at it and takes up a silver knife at one of the places, feels its dull edge and throws it down sneering.*) (*A servant appears*)

MR. W.—Howes?

SERVANT—(*coming into the room and going to W.*) Yes, sir.

MR. W.—I am going up to my room. (*with a motion of his head, indicating upstairs*) I am not feeling well. If my absence should be noticed explain to Mrs. Wolton, but do not disturb me—do you understand?

SERVANT—Yes, sir.

MR. W.—*On no account am I to be disturbed.* No one is to come to me until after the party is entirely over, don't make any mistake about that.

SERVANT—No, sir. (*WOLTON who is half way between c. and door R. turns for a moment looking about the room. He is seized with a nervous twitching of his muscles. He clenches his fists, grinds his teeth to control himself, and bowing his head, goes from the room by door R.*) (*KITTY and JOHNSTONE appear in ball room doorway, at exit of WOLTON*)

KITTY—(*looking into room on stage*) Here's a dear table, all by itself. (*Speaks as she appears in the doorway.*) (*The*

two turn in the doorway and look off R. at ETHEL and FANSHAW who are following them slowly)

JOHNSTONE—Come along Fanshaw, here's a lovely quiet table where we can say just what we like about everybody! *(They stand in doorway a moment, looking off R. waiting for the other couple, with their backs to WOLTON and room.)* (ETHEL and FANSHAW join the first couple in the doorway, and all come forward, speaking.) (ETHEL R. of table; FANSHAW down L. C.) *(The following speeches are made as they come forward to table.)*

JOHNSTONE—(R.) *(to FANSHAW and ETHEL)* How you dawdle.

ETHEL—Jack Wright tore my lace.

FANSHAW—(over L. C.) Trying to kiss her in Copenhagen. *(They are about the table. JOHNSTONE at once sits down first in the chair the servant was holding for one of the ladies. Servant then opens a bottle of champagne and pours in the glasses)*

JOHNSTONE—(sitting) Come on.

KITTY—Look at him!

ETHEL—What a rude little beast you are, Johnny!

FANSHAW—Get up! *(pushing him)*

JOHNSTONE—(down R.) Well, you girls dawdle so! (KITTY and ETHEL sit.) *(Enter MRS. LORRIMER from ball room. dressed as a Watteau Shepherdess. She is greeted by a chorus of four. Carries lamb and crook)*

ETHEL, KITTY, JOHNSTONE, FANSHAW—O, look at Mrs. Lorrimer!

MRS. L.—*(Pirouettes once around and makes a bob curtesy)* Good evening. *(laughing)* Well, I don't want to throw bouquets at myself, but I don't think it's bad.

ETHEL AND KITTY—You're splendid!

JOHNSTONE—Love— *(sits)*

KITTY—Get Mrs. Lorrimer a chair. *(They all move to make more room for her, and FANSHAW gets an extra chair from arch up R.Q)*

MRS. L.—I'm afraid I'm a fifth spoke in your wheel! *(She sits. A servant passes them bouillon which they take and eat)*

ETHEL—Don't be foolish; girls at a ball nowadays can't expect to have a man apiece. *(JOHNSTONE lights a cigarette and smokes.)* *(A servant in ball room is seen taking away the bouillon cups, while a second passes Bouches a la Reine there.)* (FANSHAW sits above ETHEL L. of table. After taking lamb and crook from Mrs. L. and placing them down L. corner.)

MRS. L.—How is the party?

JOHNSTONE—Awfully lovely party!

KITTY—A tearing success!

ETHEL—You ought to have seen the vaudeville!

MRS. L.—How did your stunt go, Ethel?

FANSHAW—Great.

ETHEL—O, my dear, a brute of a flute player ruined it. I felt like thirty cents.

FANSHAW—No one could spend much more money on a party than old Wolton is doing to-night.

MRS. L.—Does Marion show her age in a child's dress?

KITTY—She looks charmingly, but then Marion isn't so old.

ETHEL—Perhaps not so old as she usually looks.

JOHNSTONE—Aren't you a Kitty cat?

MRS. L.—Why doesn't she paint a little?

JOHNSTONE—What!

KITTY—*Marion?* Paint! Her *face!*

ETHEL—My dear, she'd die first! (*all laugh, saying "Marion"*)

MRS. L.—(*grandiloquently*) Not that I approve of painting! (*music stops*)

ALL—(*laughing*) O, no.

ETHEL—Nor I!

ALL—(*laughing*) O, no!

MRS. L.—Who's here?

JOHNSTONE—Everybody.

MRS. L.—Anyone I can marry?

KITTY—O, Mrs. Lorrimer, do be decent, you haven't been divorced a year yet.

MRS. L.—My dear, divorce isn't like death—you don't have to go into mourning! Besides that's what I want to get married for! I find I've a perfect passion for divorce! Just like men have it for drink. The more I get the more I want! (*laugh*) I've only had two divorces, and I want another!

JOHNSTONE—You must be damned careful—I beg your pardon—

MRS. L.—O, don't apologize, I say it myself!—careful about what?

JOHNSTONE—What sort of *husband you choose*.

MRS. L.—Exactly! None of your *ideal* men for me! I want a man with a bad record! (*laugh*) Plenty of proof concealed about his person, or not buried too deep in his past for me and my lawyer to ferret out. (L.) I've a perfect duck of a lawyer! He made up every bit of evidence about my last husband; that won me my case, and my dears, it just *happened* to turn out to be true! (*laugh*)

ETHEL—Speaking of records, who do you think is here to-night?

MRS. L.—*Ned Fletcher*—!!

KITTY—Yes.

MRS. L.—Girls—I'll tell you a secret—

JOHNSTONE—I don't want to hear it. (*takes a chair L. c., sits and lights cigarette*)

MRS. L.—I'm crazy about him! Where is he? (*glancing over her shoulder*)

KITTY—You've no chance, he's going to marry Marion, if she'll have him.

MRS. L.—What a shame! And will she?

ETHEL—She's mad about him!

MRS. L.—The moth and the flame! What a pity! because he'd be simply *ideal* for me! (L.) Why, do you know I hear that he—— (*stops suddenly, looking at JOHNSTONE and FANSHAW*)

JOHNSTONE—What do you hear? I'm in this.

MRS. L.—I forgot Johnny and Mr. Fanshaw—there are certain things you mustn't talk about before innocent little boys! (*ready thud*)

FANSHAW—You couldn't tell us anything about Ned Fletcher!

MRS. L.—(*laughing*) I don't want to! But I thought Marion was always going to marry Douglas Rhodes.

KITTY—O, that's all off now. It's Ned Fletcher or nothing with Marion.

ETHEL—(*laughing*) I believe she thinks she's going to reform him! (*all laugh*)

KITTY—There's one thing he isn't after Marion's money.

ETHEL—Is he so rich?

JOHNSTONE—O, rotten! (KITTY *slaps* JOHNSTONE)

MRS. L.—Very well, do you know what I shall do? I shall take Douglas.

ETHEL—(*nastily*) Yes, catch his heart on the rebound, they say it's easier that way!

JOHNSTONE—That's one on you Mrs. Lorrimer. (*party gag*)

MRS. L.—O, I'm not so very old, and have had two splendid husbands already. I don't think I have to bother about the easiest way.

JOHNSTONE—Philopene, Ethel? That's one on you.

MRS. L.—Has it been your method, my dear, because if so I can't congratulate you on the result. You must look out for a stronger rebound next time! Try a divorced man, I hear they come back with a terrific force! I'll be generous, try one of mine. (*All laugh. As they stop laughing there is the sound of something heavy falling in the room above. The chandelier trembles slightly, the lustres sound. All four lift their heads and listen a moment. (After counting three.) A short pause.*)

KITTY—What was that!

MRS. L.—The servants probably, upstairs! (*Enter MARION*

from ball room, smiling at the table of people as she passes)

JOHNSTONE—(as she comes) Here's Miss Wolton.

MRS. L.—My dear Marion, pardon me for not rising, but I assure you I look much better sitting down! (MARION stops by MRS. LORRIMER)

JOHNSTONE—Not at all, Mrs. Lorrimer, they're awfully lovely!

MRS. L.—Well, I'm sure they don't compare with yours.

JOHNSTONE—Oh, I don't know, there are others. (MARION goes down c.)

MRS. L.—Marion, is Mr. Dawson here?

MARION—No, he's in Boston, why?

MRS. L.—Oh, nothing, only he's an unmarried man, so I thought I'd ask. (Servant in ball room takes away plates and second servant passes ices)

MARION—(to MRS. LORRIMER) Why are you so late, Emily? (back to MRS. L.)

MRS. L.—My little girl was seedy, and I couldn't get away until I saw her asleep comfortably. It's an awful care for a young woman, my dear, having a *posthumous* child!

MARION—A what?

MRS. L.—A *posthumous* child!

MARION—(laughing) How do you mean, Emily?

MRS. L.—Why, born after it's father's divorce!

MARION—Are you girls going to have coffee?

MRS. L.—No.

ETHEL—Nor I.

MARION—Very well then; join us for another game,—(down c.) (She makes a movement of starting) Unless you men want to smoke. In that case take your coffee in the library where you'll find cigarettes and other smoking materials.

JOHNSTONE—(who has a cigarette in his mouth and has been smoking all through the supper) I say! Oughtn't I to have smoked here?

MARION—(smiling) No! (she starts to go out through ball room)

JOHNSTONE—I beg your pardon. Well, any way it's an awfully lovely party.

MRS. L.—Marion, is it true you're going to be divorced—I mean married?

MARION—(by doorway at 2). Married? I hope so, some day (smiling, exit at B. into ball room.) (JOHN. is eating ice.) (MRS. LORRIMER crosses to him. KITTY in front of table.) (ETHEL takes up lamb down R.) (FANSHAW exits c.)

MRS. L.—Haven't you finished your ice, Johnny?

JOHNSTONE—No. I like to squash mine, all up, and eat it soft.

MRS. L.—Johnny who made your bow?

JOHNSTONE—Mother. (*KITTY drives JOHNNY out of room by hitting him with her ball. MRS. L. crosses to ETHEL and takes lamb*)

ETHEL—(*who has looked back over her shoulder into the ball room, goes up to arch c.*) Mr. Fletcher has joined Marion.

MRS. L. (*coming c.*) Oh, that's why Marion wished us to hurry! She wanted this room for herself and Fletcher!

ETHEL—Probably. (*R. of MRS. L.*)

MRS. L.—Let's go—as if we were gone for good, and then stroll back *casually* in a few minutes, and see how we find them!

KITTY—Isn't that eavesdropping? (*R. of MRS. L.*)

MRS. L.—Don't be absurd! There isn't any such thing as eavesdropping nowadays. Everybody listens to everything they can, and everyone more or less knows they're being listened to.

KITTY—But what good will it do?

MRS. L.—Why if we—come back and catch them with his arm around her we can take it for granted they are engaged.

ETHEL—I don't think that follows, I'm sure if I were engaged to every man I let— (*she stops quickly. All laugh*)

KITTY—(*laughing*) You gave yourself away that time, Ethel! (*They move out by door B. into ball room. As they do so, servant enters from R., and MARION enters meeting girls and MRS. LORRIMER*)

MARION—Going to dance—

GIRLS—Yes.

MRS. L.—No, play games. Kissing games. (*all laugh and exit R. c.*)

MARION—Oh, Mrs. Lorrimer. (*crossing down B. c.*) (*Enter FLETCHER C. from R.*)

FLETCHER—Why did you run away?

MARION—I was afraid if I didn't, the servants would never get this room ready.

FLETCHER—Have you a partner?

MARION—No.

FLETCHER—(*pleased to be with her and yet embarrassed*) May I—will you—that is—won't you dance with me?

MARION—(*over L.*) Yes!

FLETCHER—(*near her*) I wonder why I feel so diffident with you. I think I never was diffident before! (*smiling*)

MARION—(*smiling*) No, you haven't that reputation.

FLETCHER—(*smiling apologetically, but humorously*) Dear me, I hope you don't know what my reputation isn't—or is.

MARION—(*seriously*) I don't judge a man by his reputation.

FLETCHER—(*involuntarily, half under his breath, humorously*) Thank Heaven! (*MARION looks at him, hearing him. There is*

a pause. *She waits willingly for him to speak, hoping he will*) I've been a very bad fellow.

MARION—Some of the best men in the world have begun that way.

FLETCHER—They probably had some one to help—to believe in them.

MARION—And haven't you?

FLETCHER—Will you believe in me enough to—— (*looks off in ball room up a little, MARION follows.*) (*He loses his control and speaks passionately.*) Don't you understand, I love you—— (*he embraces her, she allows him. The embrace lasts a moment*) You can be my salvation! Will you be?

MARION—(*in his arms, looking up at him*) I will—if I can——

FLETCHER—(*whose eyes never quite look into MARION'S, loosening the embrace*) You will marry me?

MARION—Yes. (*kisses him, then quickly moves down R.*)

FLETCHER—(*following her. Not looking at her*) People say I'm a blackguard!

MARION—People say a great many things that aren't true. What can a man do with all the world against him! "People" can force him into being as bad as they say he is.

FLETCHER—Then you won't believe them.

MARION—No, not if you deny what they say. (*he holds out his hand, she takes it. At this moment, Mrs. LORRIMER and ETHEL appear at B., in ball room, ostentatiously counting the chairs and making small calculation about the cotillon in the ball room, but really watching clyly MARION and FLETCHER. MARION sees it and speaks to FLETCHER quickly under her breath*) Don't move! Don't drop my hand, but shake it as if we'd been making a bet, and follow my lead! (*aloud*) It's settled them! You take my bet?

FLETCHER—(*shaking her hand and then dropping it casually*) A box of cigars, against a box of gloves! (*sotto voce*) What is it?

MARION—(*sotto voce*) Mrs. Lorrimer in the next room watching us. (*speaks in low voice satirically to FLETCHER as if she were speaking to Mrs. LORRIMER, crossing R. c.*) Oh, no, Emily! I am going to marry Mr. Fletcher, but I intend to be the one to announce that fact, and not you. (*Mrs. LORRIMER and ETHEL turn. They see MARION and FLETCHER and pretend surprise; they remain in the ball room*)

MRS. L.—(*with trumpet*) Oh! Marion! are you here? (*Mrs. L. down C. ETHEL down L.*)

MARION—Ahem! (*with a quick amused side glance to FLETCHER*) We've been watching you for some time, what was the matter with the chairs? (*MARION R. C. and FLETCHER goes R.*)

MRS. L.—(*embarrassed*) Nothing—we were merely choosing places?

ETHEL—They lead from the other end, don't they? (*joining FLETCHER over R.*)

MARION—Yes, you know Kitty is leading for me. (*enter DOUGLAS C. He joins them*) Who are you dancing with Douglas?

DOUGLAS—No one; I'm staggng it.

MRS. L.—You don't mean to say Marion, you have more men than women to-night!

MARION—(*with mock pride*) Who says I don't know how to give a party?

MRS. L.—(*to DOUGLAS*) Damn it! I wish I hadn't said I'd dance with little Johnny, or I'd come to your rescue. (*DOUGLAS secretly amused, bows his thanks. ETHEL and MARION exchange an amused glance*)

ETHEL—(*to MARION*) Douglas ought to give Johnny a vote of thanks.

MARION—(*C.*) Come, they are taking their places. (*A movement of all to go off R. C.*) (*Enter MRS. LORRIMER and ETHEL.*) (*DOUGLAS touches FLETCHER on the arm*)

DOUGLAS—(*to FLETCHER*)—May I speak to you just a moment?

FLETCHER—Certainly— (*all go but MARION*) Excuse me one moment, Miss Wolton, Rhodes wants a word with me. (*MARION starts slightly, and turning quickly, looks questioningly at DOUGLAS. He answers her gaze seriously and unflinchingly. She turns to FLETCHER*)

MARION—(*to FLETCHER*) No—I won't excuse you. (*assuming a more or less coquettish air*) You must come with me at once. (*FLETCHER looks surprised, but moves as if to obey her*)

DOUGLAS—But why won't you trust Mr. Fletcher with me? (*FLETCHER laughs amused*)

MARION—(*nonplussed for a moment, then she changes her mind*) I was only jesting. (*to FLETCHER*) But you won't— (*to DOUGLAS, looking at him meaningly and seriously*)—keep us waiting long, will you? I warn you, Mr. Fletcher, I shall let them begin without us. (*exits through ball room to R., as FLETCHER quickly kisses her hand.*) (*DOUGLAS waits till they are quite alone. FLETCHER moves down R.*)

DOUGLAS—(*following down C.*) (*Quietly*) Are you going to ask Miss Wolton to marry you?

FLETCHER—I am not.

DOUGLAS—(*momentary surprise—doubt, then relief—a sigh*) In that case I've nothing more to say, let's join the others. (*both make a move to go*)

FLETCHER—(who cannot resist saying it) You see Rhodes, I have asked her already.

DOUGLAS—(stops and turning, faces FLETCHER, whose back is toward audience)

FLETCHER—(turning leisurely) About fifteen minutes ago—but I can't see what business it is of yours.

DOUGLAS—I love her.

FLETCHER—That's no news to anybody!

DOUGLAS—And I don't intend she shall marry a—— (he stops. Short pause)

FLETCHER—What? Why don't you finish?

DOUGLAS—(more quietly) A man like you.

FLETCHER—Oh, I'm not so very unique, lots of girls run the risk of marrying a man like me!

DOUGLAS—(follows down R. c.) I suppose you told her she is more to you than any one in the world.

FLETCHER—No. "Men like me" don't talk that rot. I put my arms around her—— (stops interrupted by the movement of DOUGLAS.) (DOUGLAS makes an involuntary movement, expressive of rage, controlled instantaneously, clenching his fists.) (Finishes with a half smile at DOUGLAS) And told her I loved her.

DOUGLAS—(suppressed anger) You couldn't say she was more than any one else to you, because it would have been a lie!

FLETCHER—(smiling) You flatter me. (crosses to L.)
(ready music)

DOUGLAS—The one that is most to you is YOUR CHILD. (FLETCHER starts, is surprised) You can't deny the child——

FLETCHER—I "can"! I can deny anything.

DOUGLAS—The lie could be proved to your face. On May, 1893, in Lenox, a young kindergarten teacher,—you blackguard you!

FLETCHER—(a little angry) Who told you that story?

DOUGLAS—(sneers) I'm not the only man who knows it! That sort of thing never lies buried!

FLETCHER—The girl's all right now!

DOUGLAS—Oh, I know, you sent her abroad, and pay for the child. Well, that's the mother's look out, and not mine. But I don't believe she's the only case. One has only to look at your life now—It was fortunate for you this winter that Mrs. Clifton's divorce trial didn't come off. (m)

FLETCHER—(a little more angry) (Back to DOUGLAS) Still what has all this to do with you, and I'll deny it all besides, if I feel like it, or need to.

DOUGLAS—You know you're not fit to marry Marion Wolton!

FLETCHER—I know I love her.

DOUGLAS—For how long?

FLETCHER—I can't say, but neither can you—And besides, *she loves me!* (to c.)

DOUGLAS—Would she if she knew you?

FLETCHER—(smiling) Oh, come, Rhodes, drop it! I don't care a damn what I have done, I'm going to marry her! I haven't made any bones about myself, I've told her I've been a bad lot! (up c.)

DOUGLAS—Oh, yes, I know, you've confessed probably to having been “fast,” that nearly always appeals to a woman, heaven knows why; I suppose it's the instinct for reformation in them, but how much of your life does that word “fast” convey to a pure girl like Marion?

FLETCHER—(smiling) Quite enough! (serious) But if she did know all there was to be known, Love forgives a great deal.

DOUGLAS—But not *everything*. There are certain things Marion would never accept. She would refuse to take the place that was the right of another.

FLETCHER—(down to him) Oh, that's your point is it! Well, hunt out Jeannette Gros if you can, it'll do you no good! (crosses L. c.)

DOUGLAS—(follows quickly.) (Angry) You can't prove that, because it's *not true!*

FLETCHER—(facing DOUGLAS. Angry too) I'll prove she had other lovers before me. Good God, man, you don't know what Marion Wolton's love means to me! I've never loved like this before! Why, if it were possible for me to treat her as I have—the other, I *couldn't*. I want to marry Marion Wolton—I *want* to make *her my wife!* and I *will!* I've had all there can be got out of my old life, and I'm sick of it. Here's my chance at a new life, and do you think I'm going to give it up? No! (forgetting and raising his voice) Do you hear me, No!!

DOUGLAS—(softly) Not so loud!

FLETCHER—(lowered voice) No! I'll fight for it with my last breath. (crosses L.)

DOUGLAS—Then I say again, you're a blackguard!

FLETCHER—(laughs, turns back to audience) What do you want to do, fight? You know we can't here. I give you liberty to say to her all you can against me.

DOUGLAS—She won't believe me.

FLETCHER—Exactly—she loves me—

DOUGLAS—But there is one other I can tell the truth to, who may believe me. (cross R.)

FLETCHER—Look out you don't make yourself ridiculous, going about the jilted lover, trying to take away the character of the accepted man! (leisurely following him a little)

DOUGLAS—I don't have to do any “going about!” You are

well enough known in our world to keep most of our doors closed against you. Few people are as blind as the Woltons, and I will open *his* eyes!

FLETCHER—You'll tell her father?

DOUGLAS—He is the one person she would listen to, and he can verify what I say.

FLETCHER—(*change of tone, showing he fears this*) Damn it! I mean to be a decent man.

DOUGLAS—(*goes close to him and looks straight in his face*) Then go to Jeannette Gros and marry her!

FLETCHER—(*angry again*) Go to H—— (*back to c.*) (*Change of tone*) You think if I'm out of the way you'll get her? (*ready cotillon*)

DOUGLAS—She's told me she doesn't love me, and she proved to me that she won't believe the truth of you without extraordinary proof. There is only one person in the world who could naturally interfere and give her anything like that proof, and that's her father, and I shall tell him to-night, before I leave this house, before you can announce your engagement!

FLETCHER—With Miss Wolton's permission, I will announce our engagement to-night in spite of you, and her father. (*music stops.*) (*Enter MRS. LORRIMER, with a favor, Lamb and Trumpet.*)

MRS. L.—(*c.*) Oh, here you men are! If you think this is going to be allowed, you are very much mistaken! What do men think we ask them to parties for? Eh? Anyway a cotillon is a leap year dance, on such an occasion you are our natural prey! Come, sir! (*pretending to blow trumpet*)

DOUGLAS—(*r.*) No. (*smiling apologetically*) Postpone my pleasure till a little later in the evening, will you? Don't be angry with me, I want to have a few words with Mr. Wolton, then I'll come and give *all* my favors to you!

MRS. L.—(*c.*) That sounds attractive; I'll let you off. (*makes lamby squeak.*) (*Smiling turn to FLETCHER.*) But I won't let you off.

FLETCHER—(*L., smiling*) Don't, please! I'm very happy to be your *consolation* prize. (*takes lamb.*) (*Music dance.*)

MRS. L.—I'm a dangerous woman to make that remark to. word.

You'd better be careful, or I might take you literally at your

FLETCHER—Oh, if you only would. (*pulls lamb's head*)

MRS. L.—What a charming speech. (*She and FLETCHER go into ball room and off r.*) (*FLETCHER makes lamb squeak.*) (*MRS. WOLTON, her arms full of a set of gay favors, crosses the ball room from r., and DOUGLAS sees her and takes a step or two towards her, and then waits till she has finished speaking to the girl. MRS. WOLTON turns and DOUGLAS addresses her.*)

DOUGLAS—Mrs. Wolton, is Mr. Wolton in the ball room?

MRS. W.—No, I think he's in the smoking room—Aren't you going to dance? (*coming into room*)

DOUGLAS—Not just yet—later—— (*half bows apologetically. (M.) (At the same moment the music swells and the procession of dancers, in couples, dance in five or six couples into the front room, the line curving away to R. to suggest that there are very many more couples in the ball room out of sight. As they dance they are laughing and talking—the first couple turn, the other couples making bridges under which the first couple goes, and passes into ball room and off R., followed by each couple the same.) (Music softens.) (MRS. WOLTON has drawn to one side R. C., when the dancers came in.) (In this dance, scarfs are used by dancers.)*

DOUGLAS—Mr. Wolton there?

MRS. W.—(*mildly surprised*) He?

DOUGLAS—I want to see Mr. Wolton very much to-night—now. It is a matter of the greatest importance. (*enter servant R. from ball room*)

MRS. W.—(*c.*) Where is Mr. Wolton, Howes?

SERVANT—(*R.*) He has gone to his bedroom, m'm. (*crosses behind MRS. W. down R.*)

MRS. W.—(*surprised, but not too much so*) What?

SERVANT—He said he was on no account to be disturbed until the party was over.

MRS. W.—(*a little anxious*) Was he ill?

SERVANT—He didn't appear so, m'm.

DOUGLAS—(*L. to MRS. W.*) Was he feeling ill to-night?

MRS. W.—(*with a relieved voice, showing no anxiety*) No, not at all. He was in splendid spirits. Probably he was bored and thought he would be quieter upstairs.

DOUGLAS—I don't want to be offensive, but I must, if possible see him to-night.

MRS. W.—(*speaking very casually*) Howes, you might go and say to Mr. Wolton, Mr. Rhodes wants to speak to him about something very urgent. (*to DOUGLAS*) If he doesn't want to come down stairs again, he can send for you to come up.

SERVANT—Beg pardon, m'm, but he was so very strong with me that I shouldn't under any circumstances go to him, I don't quite like to—— (*he hesitates embarrassed at having to not obey MRS. WOLTON's request at once*)

MRS. W.—Really, he made such a point of it! Oh, very well then, you needn't go, Howes. (*with a nod of dismissal.*) (*Servant exits into ball room and off c.*)

MRS. W.—(*lowers her voice so that HOWES shan't hear her, as he goes*) Mr. Wolton is rather hard on the servants if they fail to obey his orders to the letter. I'll go myself and

see if he won't see you. (*enter MARION C. from ball room, as her mother starts R.*)

MARION—Mother, where are you going with the favors?

MRS. W.—To your father for a moment.

MARION—(*C.*) But you can't, we need them. (*crosses R.*) (*Music stops.*) I'll go for you. (*MRS. W. exit C. as MARION exits R.*) (*FANSHAW appears from ball room, enters C.*)

FANSHAW—Come on Rhodes, we need your help. (*seizing DOUGLAS*)

DOUGLAS—How long will it take?

FANSHAW—Oh, only a couple of minutes. (*RHODES and FANSHAW exit C. followed by MRS. WOLTON.*)

TRIMMINS—(*off stage*) Mrs. Lorrimer! Mrs. Lorrimer! (*enters C. R.*) Oh, Mrs. Lorrimer, won't you dance through with me? (*TRIMMINS does this*)

MRS. L.—Do excuse me. (*adds a little sotto voce and coaxingly*) And as a favor to me, go and take out poor Susie Woodruff. You know it's only "snap the whip" figure, so it won't make much difference to you if she is a bit heavy. (*TRIMMINS makes a bored grimace, and goes up stage. MRS. L. catches him*) Yes, to please me! It isn't as if it were a waltz and you had to get her around all by yourself!

TRIMMINS—(*smiling*) Very well, to please you! But Susan Woodruff she's the limit. (*doubles up his arm and feels his muscles meaningly, and exits C. to L.*) (*MARION enters R., tragically. White, frightened, she staggers quickly into the room and stopping for a second, gasps in a horrified whisper*)

MARION—Mother! (*crosses to arch up C.*) Mother!! (*music "Won't You Come And Play With Me."*) (*Singing heard pp. off R.*) (*MARION L. C. turns, frightened, goes down. Her mother comes to her from L. They meet near C.*)

MRS. W.—(*frightened, puzzled*) What is it? What's the matter?

MARION—(*for a moment, can't speak. She opens her lips, but the words refuse to come. Then she manages to gasp out*) Father!

MRS. W.—Your father—what? (*starts and looks at her questioningly, frightened, as the music swells, and is joined in by the voices of the dancers*)

MARION—He is dead!

MRS. W.—Dead!! (*she makes a movement towards door R. MARION stops her*)

MARION—It's too horrible!—he has killed himself—— (*adds the latter in lower tone, almost fainting.*) (*The dancers appear in the ball room hand in hand in single file, led by FANSHAW and dance wildly in—all singing "Won't You Come And Play With Me." They make a big circle about MARION and MRS. WOLTON, dancing out through the ball room to R.,*

the music and singing becoming fainter as they disappear. The two women are left alone.) (Re-enter DOUGLAS from ball room R.)

DOUGLAS—May I go up? (*he sees the condition of Mrs. WOLTON and the expression of MARION*) Is your mother ill?

MARION—Help me take her to—my room—I will tell you. (*dancers cross L. and back as they exit.*) (*Music changes to waltz.*) (*All go out R.* MRS. LORRIMER, *on end, drops their hands at c.* MRS. WOLTON and MARION *shudder as they go out R.* I E.)

MRS. L.—(C.) Where is Mr. Rhodes?

FANSHAW—(R.) He was here a moment ago. (*enter servant R.* I E. *He has his overcoat on and carries his hat.* MRS. LORRIMER *turns down c.*)

MRS. L.—Have you seen Mr. Rhodes?

SERVANT—He is just coming m'm.

MRS. L.—(*looking at Servant and seeing something in his face and manned.*) (*Servant crosses hurriedly*) Is there anything the matter? Where is Mrs. Wolton? (*DOUGLAS enters R. before Servant can answer.* MRS. LORRIMER *at once turns to him, ignoring servant, who, on a run, bows slightly and exits L.*)

MRS. L.—(to DOUGLAS) What's the matter?

DOUGLAS—(R.) A most terrible thing has happened.

MRS. L.—What?

DOUGLAS—You must help me to get rid of all the guests! (*ready back lights out*)

MRS. L.—To get rid— (*interrupted*)

DOUGLAS—(*interrupting*) Mr. Wolton has committed suicide. (*ready calls*)

MRS. L.—(*starts and shudders, speaks very rapidly*) Mr. —how awful! What are you going to do? You can't tell the people now. What in the world did the man mean by not waiting till the party was over! (*crosses L.*) If it isn't like you men! Your own comfort before anybody else's—Well—the only thing is to pretend it hasn't happened at all—Make some excuse for Marion and her mother—the guests needn't know anything about it, and finish the party!

DOUGLAS—Mrs. Lorrimer! Impossible!

MRS. L.—It would be sort of uncomfortable for us who know, (*she adds sincerely*)—and the poor Woltons, of course it is awful for them.

DOUGLAS—I thought if you spoke to Fanshaw and stopped the cotillon and told a few of the guests— (*interrupted*)

MRS. L.—(*aghast*) What! The truth?

DOUGLAS—No, say Mr. Wolton has been taken suddenly and most dangerously ill—

MRS. L.—(to DOUGLAS) Very well, I'll do what I can. (back lights out)

DOUGLAS—Stop! (music stops.) (DOUGLAS goes to doorway into ball room and draws the heavy portieres, shutting out the ball room.) (MARION enters R. at door R. 1 E.)

MARION—(to DOUGLAS, who stays at curtains c.) They are going?

DOUGLAS—Yes.

MARION—They know?

DOUGLAS—Not the truth!

MARION—Thank you.

DOUGLAS—Mrs. Lorrimer is arranging it. (Footman off stage calls "43.") (Begin calls.) (These numbers are repeated in another voice and farther away.) (A moment's pause.)

DOUGLAS—I wish I could comfort you.

MARION—(smiling, strainedly at him) Thank you. (Footman calls "56!—56!—89!") (Footman calls "32!—32!—61!") DOUGLAS holds back the portiere into ball room)

MARION—I'd better go back to mother. How good you are to us—believe me I appreciate it all Douglas, all. (Enter DAWSON hurriedly R. Shows excitement and emotion.) (At the same moment enter FLETCHER from ball room at back. The two men speak the word "MARION" at the same time, and turning, see each other. DAWSON also observes the presence of DOUGLAS.) Uncle Fred! (Crosses to him L. c.) (Footman calls "115!") (To DAWSON) You know!

FLETCHER—(gently, persuasively joining her) Why didn't you send for me at once?

DAWSON—Gentleman, you will forgive me, if I thank you both and say the guests are leaving: The family would like to be alone.

DOUGLAS—I understand, but if I can be of any use?

DAWSON—Thank you.

DOUGLAS—(going up c.) Shall we go, Fletcher?

FLETCHER—Good-night, Rhodes. (politely) My place is here; it is my privilege to stay by Miss Wolton. (ready lights out. No calls.) (DAWSON looks up surprised. RHODES looks angry. FLETCHER continues, to MARION) May I speak? (MARION bows her head in assent) Mr. Dawson, your niece has promised to-night to be my wife. At such a terrible moment as this, I claim the right of membership of the family, to be with you and help all I can. You will accept my offices? (Holding out his hand)

DAWSON—(shaking his hand) Certainly. You have won a wife in a thousand. But you may be called on to do more perhaps than you imagine.

FLETCHER—I am entirely at your service.

DOUGLAS—(L.) *(Near doorway back, to all. At curtains, leaves curtains open.)* Good-night! *(All turn slightly. DOUGLAS bows slightly and exits. FLETCHER going to MARION.)*

DAWSON—*(watching them)* Thank God! His money will save them! *(Servant enters R. I E. speaks softly to DAWSON.)*

SERVANT—Mr. Dawson! *(DAWSON starts, nods to servant, who holds door R. open.)*

DAWSON—I'm coming. *(slowly, seriously, meaningly)* Fletcher, I want a long talk with you to-night before you go.

FLETCHER—Very well, sir. *(DAWSON sighs heavily and exits R. Servant leaves R. door open.)* *(The two, MARION and FLETCHER, hear the door shut behind them, and make a movement, they realize they are alone.)* *(A heavy front door slams.)* *(Lights out.)* *(There is silence.)* *(Taking MARION in his arms)* My poor little girl!—My poor little girl—Cry for God's sake cry!

MARION—*(with an outburst)* Oh, it is so horrible! *(She sobs loud and hysterically in FLETCHER's arms, her own arms about his neck)*—so—horrible——

CURTAIN

(At close of Act I, servant after saying "Mr. Dawson," and being replied to by DAWSON, exits R. by the same door he has just entered. After DAWSON's exit, another servant turns on electric button and the light go out on the stage as well as in the ball room. If possible have morning light come into the room from window L. The servant, after having turned out the lights, draws the curtains open at back without perceiving the presence of FLETCHER and MARION, and exits off R., through the ball room.) *(Have curtains begin to fall after MARION's first "Oh, it is horrible!")*

ACT II

SCENE—A church. At L. are the steps leading to the chancel and the chancel rails. Beyond the rails are palms grouped which conceal the altar. Past the chancel, up stage L. is the exit into the choir. Down stage L. is the exit to the vestry and robing room. To R. of c. begin the pews of the church on each side of a broad centre aisle. The stage is set a little diagonally so that the aisle runs from upper R. toward c. stage. This will make a row or two more pews above the aisle than below it. White satin ribbons are stretched above the aisle on each side, across the entrances to the pews, this ribbon the ushers lift aside as they seat the guests. The exit R. is made by the c. aisle.

DISCOVERED—*Three ushers, JOHNSTONE, FANSHAW and TRIMMINS. JOHNSTONE is sitting in the first pew, FANSHAW standing outside and leaning over its front, talking to JOHNSTONE. TRIMMINS is leaning with his back against the side of the first pew across the aisle up stage. They are dressed in long frock coats, with buttonholes of white orchids. They are engaged in putting on white kid gloves.*

Bunch	Bunch
Amber Medium	Amber Medium
Drop	
Window	Window
Transparent	Transparent
Door	
Blue and White Border	2 Lamps on Strips
	Backing Arch
Blue and White Border Stops) Platform
	White Bunch
3 Lights on Strip	2 Lights
Drapery Border	
Tormentor	Tormentor
Blue and White Border	
White Foots with a Few Red Lamps on	
Diagram of Lights	
in	
Act II.	

Back drop (2 *transparent windows*)
 Window Font Screen to choir Window
 Smilax and roses
 Pew Pew Door
 Pew Low Stool and Leg Drop
 Palms (Arches)
 Garlands on
 Pillar
 Pillar
 Palms Large
 Platform
 Garlands on
 Arches of
 Chancel Rail
 Pew Pew Pew Pew Smilax and
 Roses on
 Front of Rail Palms
 Drapery Border
 Garlands on Ends of Pews
 Tormentor Tormentor
 Drapery Drapery
 Interior of Church Oak Woodwork
 Pews Rail Ceilings
 Steps and Wainscoting
 Stone Walls and Pillars
 Dark Red Carpet on Floor and Platforms and Steps
 Cushions on Pews

FANSHAW—Is Fletcher in the vestry yet?

JOHNSTONE—Heavens, no, how long do you want him to hang around? But he won't be late, he's serious this time.

TRIMMINS—I'm glad to hear it, because he's going to marry a splendid girl. (*a short pause*) I hope to goodness he really loves her.

JOHNSTONE—Oh, he does, I'm sure. I'll bet you if you like, will you put up a silk hat on it? (*rises*)

FANSHAW—Yes, I'll take you!

JOHNSTONE—All right. (*exit from pew.*) (*Holding out his hand, which FANSHAW takes and they shake.*) Done!

FANSHAW—And I hope I'll lose. And if I were he I'd tremble in my boots with a past like his, and the present getting so conspicuously favorable.

JOHNSTONE—Oh, I don't believe in your boomerang pasts!

FANSHAW—And I don't believe Fletcher can have one single memory of his own which he wouldn't rather forget since he has become to care for Marion Wolton. (*crosses to r. to pew.*) (*JOHNSTONE cross L. C.*)

TRIMMINS—Yes, but don't you think a fellow can sow his wild oats and be done with them, and become a good man and an honest citizen.

FANSHAW—Of course I do, else good Lord, where'd I be! We can't all be ideal chaps like Douglas Rhodes. But there are oats and *oats*, and Fletcher's are—oats!

JOHNSTONE—Well, he's sorry for them. (*crosses to pew R.*) (*As DOUGLAS RHODES enters, TRIMMINS exits R.*) (*RHODES is also dressed as an usher and comes up the aisle in time to hear JOHN'S speech, as he joins them.*)

DOUGLAS—Who's sorry for what?

JOHNSTONE—Fletcher for—for—for—everything!

DOUGLAS—Hum—— (*DOUGLAS goes up L.*)

FANSHAW—If he's *honestly* sorry, he's no business marrying Marion Wolton.

JOHNSTONE—Why not?

FANSHAW—He has a debt to be paid. He can't wash his hands of the kind of things he's done, if he were in earnest in regretting his old life, he would do something to make up for it.

JOHNSTONE—Well, isn't he! He's going to marry a nice girl and settle down.

FANSHAW—If he were in earnest he'd marry instead one of at least two girls I know of—not this one.

JOHNSTONE—Oh, come there's no reason why he should do a quixotic thing like that, he has a future before him.

FANSHAW—He has their futures before him.

JOHNSTONE—Don't preach. Why should he be dragged down——

FANSHAW—(*interrupting*) To where he dragged them?

JOHNSTONE—Exactly, Fletcher's no fool. And then there's Mr. Dawson. He swears by Fletcher now, they're regular pals.

FANSHAW—Ever since Mr. Wolton's death. I don't understand it.

DOUGLAS—(*coming down L.*) Yes, Dawson really believes in Fletcher—well perhaps he's right. There must be some good in everybody and perhaps Fletcher is just beginning to come to the top. Let's hope so.

JOHNSTONE—Hang it, fellows brace up anyway. This isn't a funeral you know. Hello there's the organ. (*Organ music begins.*) (*Organ music selections appropriate and usual on such occasions continue uninterruptedly till place is indicated in the Mss. for them to stop.*) The people will be coming now. (*He exits R.*) (*Two other ushers make a movement, throwing off a curtain, lazy nonchalant manner, and getting themselves into more dignified readiness for their duties.*)

DOUGLAS—(*rises crosses to L.*) I tell you, Fanshaw, this is a hard day for me.

FANSHAW—But I'm glad you decided to come. It would have made all sorts of gossip if you hadn't.

DOUGLAS—(*sighs*) Yes. Anyway as it's got to be now we must all make the best of it.

FANSHAW—No one besides me dreams your life is still wrapped up in Marion Wolton.

DOUGLAS—(*embarrassed but pleasantly.*) (*With a half laugh*) And I suppose, that ought to be some consolation, but I don't know as it is. However, I shall never be able to thank you enough for the comfort you've been. A man must have some one to talk to. And it isn't every fellow who can have a friend like you.

FANSHAW—(*embarrassed, but pleased*) Shut up! Here's Fletcher's mother, she came on from Richmond yesterday. (*He goes down c. aisle to meet her.*) And behind are those girls they want put into the front pews. (*FANSHAW and DOUGLAS exit R.*) (*At the same moment that the two disappear, MRS. FLETCHER appears on the arm of the third usher, TRIMMINS.*)

MRS. F.—(*to TRIMMINS, as he shows her into the first pew L.*) You know Mrs. Wolton, of course?

TRIMMINS—The bride's mother? (*bows in affirmative*)

MRS. F.—When she comes, won't you show her in here with me please? (*TRIMMINS bows and exits R.*) (*MRS. FLETCHER sits, then kneels a moment, and then reseats herself with a touch to the trimming of the waist of her gown somewhere.*) (*As enter R. FANSHAW with MRS. LORRIMER, JOHNSTONE with*

KITTY and TRIMMINS with ETHEL, ladies outside.) (*Ushers exit R. as soon as guest is seated.*)

MRS. L.—(*On being shown into the first pew down stage.*) Is this the farthest front you can seat us? (*In a dissatisfied tone.*)

FANSHAW—(*goes off R.*) This is the front pew.

MRS. L.—(*laughingly*) Of course so it is: How silly of me! (*She passes to the end of the pew nearest to the audience*)

KITTY—(*as she follows into the pew to JOHNSTONE.*) Are we late?

JOHNSTONE—(*off L. 1 E.*) No you're awfully early. (*TRIMMINS off R.*)

ETHEL—(*following into pew.*) Oh, I say, girls. Isn't that a shame, we're early. (*The three women are standing in the pew they all turn around to glance back into the church which is supposed to be filling with guests, every once in a while some one being seated by an usher in one of the pews visible to the audience. After a glance round the three sit down.*)

What do you think of Douglas Rhodes being an usher?

MRS. L.—Oh, my dear, it doesn't take these men long to get over a hopeless passion!

KITTY—If he is over it.

GERTRUDE—Of course he's over it, or he wouldn't be here, would he!

MRS. L.—Every time I've tried to make love to him, he has seemed to me awfully in love with her still. (*Laugh.*) (*Enter guests.*) (*Stop organ No. 1.*)

KITTY—I was wondering this morning where in the world Marion met Mr. Fletcher?

ETHEL—Perhaps it was at that Christian thing-a-may-gig she's interested in.

KITTY—You mean the Young Men's Christian Association?

ETHEL—Yes, I'd bet on it's being the Young Men's. (*Laughs*)

MRS. L.—Oh, my dear, you know he isn't that sort of a man at all. He's much more my style!

KITTY—Well you know none of us ever met him till he began to go to the Woltons. (*Enter ushers and guests.*) (*A new selection is started on the organ and all half rise and turn, but turn back again at once into their places complacently.*)

ETHEL—I think Marion's been getting to be a perfect stick any way these last few years with all the plain covered books she reads and all her "university settlement" stuff in the slums, and her working girls' clubs and things. But that makes it all the funnier for her to marry a man she's really not known very long, don't you think so?

GERTRUDE—Where did he come from anyway?

ETHEL—Everywhere—which you know is as good as nowhere. He's that sort of a man. (*Stop No. 2.*)

MRS. L.—Oh, no, his family comes from Virginia. And he's a Harvard man. (*Enter TRIMMINS with guest to pew.*) Was in the fastest set there, so he must have some position! (*Laughs.*)

ETHEL—And he's rich.

KITTY—But Marion wouldn't marry for money.

ETHEL—Then why is she marrying him?

MRS. L.—I don't know, I think she must be in love with him.

ETHEL—(*with a laugh.*) Ha! And then everyone says she's so sensible! (*Organ No. 3.*) (*Door slams.*) (*Another different selection is started on the organ and a door is shut off the stage.*) (*The three women all half rise and turn again*)

KITTY—Here they come!

GERTRUDE—No, not yet. (*The three sit again with a murmur of disappointment.*)

GERTRUDE—Well. I only hope Marion will be happy, she's taught so many others how to enjoy the best of life.

ETHEL—I don't see how you can sympathize with her in her philanthropic fads! I believe in being charitable, but there's a right and a wrong way!

KITTY—(*quietly*) Yes, I don't suppose there's a fashionable subscription list in town that hasn't your name on it.

ETHEL—*Not one*. And as near the top as I can get.

MRS. L.—(*leaning over to speak to ETHEL*) I agree with you! I went down to one of Marion's working women's evening meetings—and really I was bored to death.

ETHEL—Isn't the church trimmed horribly, looks as if they did it themselves. It would be just like Marion to have some silly sentiment about it. (*Stop organ No. 3.*)

KITTY—(*strongly*) I like Marion for her sentiment. I only hope she isn't marrying Fletcher because of it, in the hope that she will make his life, and perhaps have to spoil her own.

BLANCHE—(*leaning over and speaking to the three women in front*) Doesn't the church look lovely!

ETHEL—(*who said it looked horridly*) Perfectly lovely!

MRS. L.—Girls, who is that dowdy looking creature?

ALL—(*turning and looking back into the church*) Where?

MRS. L.—On the left hand side of the aisle with a last winter's coat, don't you see, with the huge sleeves!

ETHEL—Oh, yes with the cheap fur trimming and the mangy muff—who is it?

BLANCHE—Oh that: It's one of the groom's country relatives.

MRS. L.—She looks it. The kind that gets cards *only* to the church. (*All laugh.*) (*All down stage rise again, excitedly*)

showing an increase of excitement over the first time they rose and looking back)

ETHEL—Are they coming?

BLANCHE—No—— (General murmur of disappointment.) It's the bride's mother. (All sit again.) (MRS. WOLTON enters R. on the arm of DOUGLAS. She is very handsomely dressed in black velvet and white lace. She is shown into the pew with MRS. FLETCHER. They exchange greetings.) (DOUGLAS exits R. at the same time the clergyman enters L. behind the chancel rail and goes back L. C. behind the palms, etc.) (Meanwhile the following dialogue is taking place)

MRS. L.—(leaning over) You mean how it doesn't.

KITTY—(half turning to look back) Suse Printly's Baltimore cousin has just come in—do you think she's a beauty?

ETHEL—You mean that awfully blonde girl.

MRS. L.—(laughingly) Yes, that's she. Fifty cents the small cottle, seventy-five the larger size! (All three laugh) (Short pause)

ETHEL—I suppose you've heard she's engaged? (Book bus)

MRS. L.—No, to whom?

ETHEL—Oh, only an American. (pause)

MRS. L.—Weddings always give me a homesick feeling. I like them so.

KITTY—Well you've had your share of them, you know.

MRS. L.—Not at all. I've only been married twice. Do you know who I have my eyes on now?

KITTY—No, who is it?

MRS. L.—Mr. Dawson!

ETHEL—What?

KITTY—You're serious . . . to marry him. (Stop organ No. 4.)

MRS. L.—Yes! Everyone will tell you he's one of the best men in the world.

ETHEL—But my dear, that's a change for you! How'll you ever get him into the divorce court?

MRS. L.—Nonsense! I don't want to. Haven't you heard . . . my house in Dakota's for sale. I don't belong to the Divorce Club any more . . . the membership is getting entirely to mixed! (They took back into the church at the people.) (MRS. WOLTON leans over to MRS. FLETCHER.)

MRS. W.—I am so nervous I could almost cry out! Oh, I shall be so relieved . . . really, I can't tell you . . . when the ceremony's over. (Organ. Wedding march.) (FLETCHER and his groomsman enter L. In front of the chancel rails and go to L. U. Guests all rise, showing excitement and turning half way face off the stage, looking down the C. aisle. MRS. WOLTON and MRS. FLETCHER stand facing the altar. MRS. FLETCHER takes MRS. WOLTON'S arm affectionately and holds her arm

tight in friendly sympathy. The faint sound is heard of boys' and men's voices singing with the organ the wedding hymn. All watch off the stage, moving very slowly as if following the slow movement of a procession coming up the c. aisle.) (Meanwhile the following dialogue occurs.)

ETHEL—The Trimmings boys are the second ushers.

MRS. L.—Which is the one you were engaged to?

ETHEL—I forget, I've flirted with them both so long, but I think it's the right hand one! (The head of the wedding procession appears. The choisters singing, followed by the six ushers (DOUGLAS and FANSHAW leading) followed by four bridesmaids.) (The bride enters leaning on the arm of Mr. DAWSON, the choristers exit extreme L. U. and continue singing off stage softly until time indicated for them to stop. The bridesmaids and ushers take their places, grouped properly about the chancel steps. MARION stands at the c. of chancel rail L. C. where she is joined by FLETCHER, the groomsman standing to one side of him. DAWSON stands on the opposite side of MARION. The clergyman has come forward and stands facing them on the other side of the chancel railing. The guests open their prayer books with a flutter of the leaves.) (MARION gives bouquet to DAWSON.) (Music stops for a moment—Mr. Dawson appears by the chancel rails. I never saw him in a more becoming place, and if it's a possible thing I shall make a rendezvous to meet him there one day! (Music) (Begins again softly, and accompanies the service. At first it is heard quite distinctly while the clergyman is going through unheard the first part of the marriage ceremony.) (A short pause in the dialogue—count 6.)

ETHEL—(whispers to KITTY and MRS. LORRIMER) How composed she is.

MRS. L.—(whispering back) One would think she was a widow! I couldn't do better myself! (A short pause in the dialogue. Count 10) (Clergyman looks up and raises his voice a little, addressing the congregation in the church . . . but not too loud so as to be too evident)

CLERGYMAN—"If any man . . . (a door is shut heavily off stage.) (At sound of door slam, DOUGLAS exit R. and returns after JEANNETTE'S entrance, going directly to MRS. WOLTON, who seems overcome) can show just cause why these two persons should not lawfully be joined together . . . (a commotion among the guests, who turn away from the altar, to look back into the church) . . . let him now speak. (DOUGLAS goes L., top of aisle, to block the passage), or else hereafter forever hold his peace! . . ." (JEANNETTE enters, going to the foot of the chancel steps cries "Stop!" She is a young and attractive looking woman, fashionably, but quietly dressed.) (All in the church are stunned. The groom turning, sees her, and

starts, but controls himself, glaring at JEANNETTE. MARION gazes in terror and horror at her, her bouquet drops unnoticed by her. MRS. WOLTON starts to leave her pew but is held back and persuaded by MRS. FLETCHER to remain quietly where she is. MR. DAWSON steps down one step toward JEANNETTE.)

DAWSON—(to JEANNETTE) Who are you?

JEAN—(with a gesture toward FLETCHER) Ask him!

DAWSON—What right have you to interrupt this ceremony?

JEAN—(with a gesture as before) Ask him!

FLETCHER—She has no right! (JEANNETTE makes an exclamation of denial aloud)

MARION—Swear that Ned, swear it to me before this altar.

FLETCHER—(hesitates a moment) I swear it.

MARION—(to clergyman) Go on with the ceremony! (DAWSON steps back to his place. The clergyman takes up his prayer book. JEANNETTE comes up one of the chancel steps)

JEAN—Stop!

FLETCHER—Is there no one here to put this woman out? (He speaks to the groomsman.) (DAWSON speaks to FANSHAW, who exits L. U. and immediately after the music ceases.) (Meanwhile the following dialogue.)

KITTY—Isn't this perfectly awful! I'm going! (going)

ETHEL—I'm not. I'm going to stay.

MRS. L.—There may be something we can do. (KITTY and GERTRUDE exit R. with several of the other guests.)

CLERGY—(to JEANNETTE) Can you show any reason why this marriage should not . . . (interrupted)

JEAN—(interrupting) I can.

CLERGY—Then do so.

JEAN—I will. (She exits R. quickly.) (MRS. WOLTON goes to the two bridesmaids up stage, who at the same time are joined by the two bridesmaids down stage.) (Guests go out.)

MRS. W.—(as she goes) Henry! (DAWSON joins them.) Take them into the choir rooms please. (To the bridesmaids) (She motions off L. U. And DAWSON with bouquet and JOHNSTONE Maids exit L. U. As they go, MRS. WOLTON and DOUGLAS meet and speak. The clergyman has been speaking to MARION) (Ushers urge guests to leave and exit R. with guests after JEANNETTE returns)

FLETCHER—(to clergyman) I say that woman cannot stop this ceremony, go on!

MARION—(to clergyman) You heard him give me his word . . . go on.

CLERGY—I am very sorry, but the church does not allow me to. I must give her the chance to prove herself. (FLETCHER speaks to his groomsman JOHNSON who exits L. into vestry.) (At the same time JEANNETTE re-enters R. bringing by the hand a small child, EDWARD, with her. She leads him straight to

the foot of the chancel steps, and pointing to FLETCHER, speaks.) (All through the rest of this scene, the child keeps hold of the skirts of the mother . . . keeping close to her side)

JEAN—This is that man's child . . . and mine. (MRS. LORRIMER *exits R. also ETHEL.*) (*Re-enter DAWSON without bouquet.*) (FLETCHER *speaks to the clergyman.* MRS. FLETCHER *leaves the pew and joins* MRS. WOLTON. DOUGLAS *joins* MRS. LORRIMER *and all the guests and ushers leave the church quietly.* MARION *starts to go to* MRS. WOLTON.)

MARION—Mother!

JEAN—(*turning and facing* MARION) Ah! . . . you go to *her*, in what must be the greatest sorrow of your life . . . well, so will he . . . (*with her arms around the child*) come to me when begins to understand, and *that's* why I am here.

FLETCHER—(*to clergyman*) Ask her for proofs! She won't have them! It is a question of her word or mine, and surely there can be no such question, when the woman is that sort of thing! (*turns to* MARION) Marion! (*The clergyman goes to* JEANNETTE, *up stage C., with whom he talks.* MARION *joins* FLETCHER *and they come down the steps to L. C., but she does not look at him.* MRS. WOLTON *starts to go to* MARION. FLETCHER *stops her*)

FLETCHER—(*to* MRS. WOLTON)—No. I wish to speak to Marion alone. (MRS. WOLTON *and* MRS. FLETCHER *speak together up stage R. C.* MRS. W., *turning back, faints.* DAWSON *and* MRS. FLETCHER *take her out L. U. E.*)

FLETCHER—(*to* MARION) Do you despise me?

MARION—I can't. . . . I love you.

FLETCHER—I didn't deceive you, did I? You will remember I confessed that before we met my life had not been fit to be lived in the same world with you.

MARION—I know, but I didn't imagine anything so bad as this.

FLETCHER—Yes, I realize that now, as it is only since I have known you that I have realized how low I was. Yet, Marion, this sort of thing exists all around us, I am not the only one. . . . (*interrupted*)

MARION—(*interrupting*) Don't—don't try to excuse it.

FLETCHER—At any rate . . . it was before I knew you.

MARION—(*looking up in his face for the first time, slowly*) Since you've known me have you been good and honest?

FLETCHER—(*without any hesitation, looks back at her, honestly*) Yes. (*They hold this position for a moment.*) (*Clergyman leaves* JEANNETTE. *She speaks after him, following.*)

JEAN—This is not legal proof, you say?

CLERGY—It is not sufficient.

JEAN—But it's moral proof. (MARION turns and goes back to her place . . . motions FLETCHER to follow. He does so, but almost timidly.) (Clergyman turns from JEAN.) Listen! So long as he remains as he is there's a chance that the world won't always be able to fling my boy's shame in his face. And I tell you sir, the agony she would suffer now is nothing . . . nothing to what her life with him would be. And think what it is to . . . (her emotion racks her) watch your child, your own flesh and blood, day and night, all its life, terror stricken . . . (she controls her emotions) lest you find some trace of his father in him!

MARION—(turns to clergyman) We are waiting.

CLERGY—But . . . (interrupted)

MARION—(interrupting) I love him, I am not willing to give him up for that woman!

CLERGY—But she swears a compact of marriage was made.

MARION—Has she proofs? (FLETCHER glares at JEANNETTE, his muscles grow rigid)

CLERGY—No. (FLETCHER relaxes)

MARION—Very well, I have his word against hers, that is enough.

CLERGY—(to FLETCHER) But I believe you do not deny the child?

FLETCHER—(tentatively) Yes . . . yes, I do deny it.

MARION—(quickly) This man's past, sir, is not yours, nor mine. But his present does belong to me, and his future shall be mine too, to make, not hers to mar.

FLETCHER—(impatient) Come! We've lost enough time, let's finish this. (Clergyman goes to his proper place behind the chancel rails)

JEAN—(coming up one step of the chancel steps) You shall not go on with this marriage.

FLETCHER—(half angry) She has shown what she is by the way she has chosen to stop it.

JEAN—That's a cowardly lie! And it was only when I saw by the papers that my letters had been useless that I decided to humiliate myself in this way. Do you think I would so degrade my womanhood for the sake of anything on God's earth, but one . . . my child. (to MARION) Do you think I could do anything but loathe him!..(with a gesture toward FLETCHER)

MARION—But I love him.

JEAN—So did I once. And now I'd save you if I could from all I know you'll have to suffer. Once you're his he'll tire of you. . . .

MARION—(interrupting)..You forget one thing . . . he is going to place a wedding ring on my hand.

JEAN—Well look at that! (*she rips her glove off violently and shows a wedding ring*) He placed it there! and said he'd take me to a church and make our compact binding.

FLETCHER—(*who has started frightened, at first, has controlled himself and speaks with intense quiet*) This woman's from the streets. She's up to all the tricks.

JEAN—(*outraged*) How dare you! I am not what he calls me! I swear that here in this holy place. *He* dragged me through the streets and any dirt upon my skirts *his* feet have left there.

FLETCHER—Be silent. (*to clergyman*) If you will not finish the service we will find some one who will.

MARION—(*to clergyman*) No, I will not leave here till we are married. I will not insult the man I have chosen for my husband by doubting his word for hers. I won't believe he made her what she is.

FLETCHER—Marion!

MARION—Ned! (*to clergyman*) Go on! Go on with the ceremony!

JEAN—You shall not go on! He's done his best to make me what he says I am . . . and God knows he might have succeeded . . . (*emotion*) but for my boy's sake I fought the fight for honor. . . . (*completely controlling her emotion*) The day he tricked me . . . (*with a look of scorn at FLETCHER*) I stood before him as pure a woman as *you* stand now, and since he left me there has never been an hour when I couldn't look straight into my child's eyes, not one minute I couldn't feel his two arms about my neck without a shudder.

FLETCHER—(*more angry*) I won't stand this!

JEAN—(*to MARION, continuing in the same key and tone as her former speech . . . and pleadingly*) Don't make vows that will take away this innocent boy's name.

MARION—You must answer to your child for his name and honor.

FLETCHER—(*enraged to JEANNETTE*) If you don't go now I'll . . . (*stops himself*)

JEAN—Before God, yours, (*to MARION*) mine, . . . (*clasp- ing her hands on her breast*) and his God (*with a look of scornful warning at FLETCHER*) that man is *his* father, and *my* husband.

FLETCHER—(*in a fearful rage*) You lie! (*enter Mrs. W: and Mrs. F.*)

MARION—(*surprised . . . pained*) Sh-h . . . go on.

JEAN—(*coming between MARION and FLETCHER, she cries out . . . a wild, heart-broken, desperate cry*) No! you shall not write Bastard on the forehead of *my* child!

FLETCHER—(*beside himself*) By God! (*He strikes JEANNETTE a blow . . . which sounds . . .* MARION cries out and

recoils. The two mothers step forward with exclamations of fright and anger. DAWSON comes from the choir L. U., brought by the sound of the cry, and goes to MARION. JEANNETTE falls when struck. The child clings with both arms about its mother's waist)

MARION—(after a moment, drawing in a long breath, to FLETCHER) Coward! (Her uncle takes a step forward to her . . . he carries her wedding bouquet. She seizes it from him and dashes it at the feet of FLETCHER, and then throwing back her head with an expression of scorn, turns from him, takes the arm of her uncle with determination and goes down the chancel steps out of the church. FLETCHER stands crestfallen. MRS. WOLTON and MRS. FLETCHER look at each other, horrified, speechless)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE—The library at the WOLTONS. A handsomely and luxuriously furnished room, somewhat disarranged by the preparations for the wedding. It is here that the wedding presents are displayed and along the two sides R. and L. and partly across the end at R. are placed long and narrow improvised tables covered with all sorts of gifts—silver, glass, etc., etc. There are five piano lamps grouped together at the upper corner of table L. There are faded flowers about.

TIME—The following day.

DISCOVERED—MRS. LORRIMER at L. of table R. c., a maid and man servant are busy wrapping up and addressing some of the wedding presents.

MRS. L.—(who has just finished writing an address on a parcel) This is one to go by express, Howes.

SERVANT—(taking it) Yes, m'm. (placing it to one side where are others tied up and addressed) Beg pardon, m'm, but it's a great pity Miss Marion should lose a husband and all the wedding presents as well.

MRS. L.—Oh, it isn't always a pity, Howes, to lose a husband—it's very often a very good thing. (Maid gives MRS. LORRIMER another parcel to address which she does—copying from a card which the maid gives her with the parcel. Maid exits c.)

SERVANT—(giving MRS. LORRIMER a visiting card) This is the address, m'm—still, if you'll excuse me for saying so, Mrs. Lorrimer—if it was me, I'd keep the presents just by way of a kind of consolation. (she and the servant tie up another box)

MRS. L.—(*addressing*) Ah, but you see their associations would be painful. I have had two husbands and I have each time moved out of the house I occupied with each on the day after losing him.

SERVANT—You know what trouble is, m'm, to have lost two husbands. Grippe, m'm? (*giving her another parcel.*) (*HOWES to table up stage*)

MRS. L.—Not exactly. Another kind of epidemic. The law, Howes. (*HOWES up c. gives parcel.* MRS. LORRIMER *addresses it from a visiting card.*) (*Enter maid with ETHEL and FANSHAW, c.*)

MAID—I will tell Miss Wolton. (*exit L. D.*) (*FANSHAW, ETHEL and MRS. LORRIMER greet each other*)

FANSHAW—(*c.*) How do you do? (*Shakes hands. MRS. L. motions with her head a dismissal to the servant, and he gets boxes R. of table R. and goes out c. R.*)

ETHEL—(*goes to sofa and sits*) Do you think Marion will see us?

MRS. L.—I don't know, I'm sure. She is with her mother.

ETHEL—You don't mean—

MRS. L.—Yes, but she isn't a bit like she was yesterday. She's crying like a child, poor thing, what she's gone through.

FANSHAW—Have you seen the papers? (*has large bundle of them*)

MRS. L.—No.

FANSHAW—It's in all of them, and some have big pictures.

ETHEL—Yes, my dear, with all of us in. Marion in a low necked dress. You're a sight, but my picture's rather good.

FANSHAW—(*who has gotten papers from coat tail pocket*) Perhaps you'd like to see them.

MRS. L.—No, no; put them away quick. I'll see them home. I take every blessed paper. (*FANSHAW up to table where he puts hat and papers*)

ETHEL—What are you doing—sending back wedding presents? (*crosses c.*)

FANSHAW—Oh, I say, is that necessary?

ETHEL—I don't believe I would, there are lots of things she's been dying to have.

MRS. L.—My dear Ethel.

FANSHAW—(*L.*) Yes, why couldn't she—er—forget—er—overlook—er—any old thing with some of them—I mean those she wants? (*turns up, looking at presents on table L. U. E.*)

MRS. L.—(*R.*) Well, there are some things I should think she'd be glad to send back. After all, twelve dozen oyster forks are too many for a small family like a newly married couple.

ETHEL—(*c.*) How many sugar spoons did she get?

MRS. L.—Thirteen, which to say the least is an unlucky number . . . (*rises, puts arm about ETHEL and comes L.*) and there's that bankrupt stock of piano lamps. (*cross L. to sofa, sits on sofa with ETHEL.*) (FANSHAW up C. ETHEL crosses R. C.) (FANSHAW comes down L.)

ETHEL—(*half laughing*) That's true! By the way, have you sent back Mrs. Bayley's presents yet?

MRS. L.—Yes, why?

ETHEL—Go on, tell her, Fanshaw. (*rises and goes to C.*) (MRS. L. and FANSHAW sit on sofa. FANSHAW R. of MRS. L.)

FANSHAW—(*laughing*) Oh, it's nothing, only I sent it to Mrs. Bayley myself three Christmases ago as a philopene. I suppose she thought I wouldn't remember, but she forgot both our initials are marked on the bottom.

ETHEL—(*at table R., examining presents.*) (*Laughing*) Yes, my dear, and Marion found them. People really ought to be more careful.

MRS. L.—Think of a woman with all Mrs. Bayley's money—(*interrupted*)

ETHEL—My dear, it is the rich who do these sort of things. Every year all my second hand Christmas cards and calendars come from my wealthiest friends! And there's that thing—(*lifting a vase*) Isn't it hideous? I don't know who sent it, but— (*interrupted*)

MRS. L.—I do.

ETHEL—(*innocently*) Who?

MRS. L.—I did.

ETHEL—Good gracious. (*laughs*) I assure you I haven't any taste. (ETHEL down C. FANSHAW rises)

FANSHAW—No, not a bit. (*goes back of sofa and up to table L. U.*) (ETHEL up stage by table)

ETHEL—How many presents did Marion get, anyway? (*looking among the things on the table R.*)

MRS. L.—I don't know. (*satirically*) I didn't count them.

ETHEL—I don't believe she got very many—Marion has always taken up so many poor people, I'm sure I never can tell what she sees in them! (ETHEL crosses R. of table)

MRS. L.—Oh, yes, Ethel, I know how you choose your friends. The other day I heard you were running after the Lloyds—that settles it, I said—they are either going to have a box at the Opera this year, or give a series of dinners, or a big ball. Ethel knows what she's about.

FANSHAW—Exactly—Ethel knows her business, but you left out one thing—they have the best cook in town, too.

ETHEL—(*taking up a box with a large silver fish knife in it*) Who gave her this fish knife?

MRS. L.—The Conrads, didn't they. . . . (ETHEL bursts out laughing)

ETHEL—Ha! ha! ha! etc., etc. If that isn't appropriate! You know the old man Conrad made all his money out of imitation sardines!

FANSHAW—And very bad imitations, too.

MRS. L.—Well, if I could make as much as Conrad, I'd be willing to imitate codfish!

ETHEL—(*takes up a small box at which she has been looking*) Here's my present. I might as well take it home with me and save you the trouble. (*puts it in her pocket. She looks at silver hand glass*)

MRS. L.—(*dryly*). Thank you! Was that your present in a Tiffany box—a small diamond pin?

ETHEL—Yes, wasn't it sweet?

MRS. L.—Rather. I saw those pins marked down at Wana-maker's Christmas time.

ETHEL—For heaven's sake, don't tell Marion. (*Re-enter maid, c.*)

MAID—Mrs. Wolton will be down at once, madam— (*Maid exits at back, L. U. E.*) (*FANSHAW crosses R. to table*)

ETHEL—(*who goes back to Mrs. L.*) Wasn't it awful yesterday—in the church! (*cross c.*)

MRS. L.—(*with a sigh*) Awful. (*rises, cross to c.*)

ETHEL—(*L.*) (*kneeling, with one knee on the sofa*) Still I will say one thing, I've always been dying to have it happen.

MRS. L.—Ethel! What a little beast you are.

FANSHAW—(*down R.*) Oh, she didn't mean to Marion particularly. Did you, Ethel?

ETHEL—No, if I had my choice I'd rather see it happen to Kitty, she's always pretending she's so sincere and all that.

MRS. L.—Marion is well rid of a man like Fletcher.

ETHEL—Oh, I don't know—I believe I'd take him to-morrow if he asked me.

MRS. L.—Well, I wish he would—it would serve you just right.

FANSHAW—Oh, but you couldn't to-morrow, even if he did ask you—you forget.

ETHEL—Oh, of course I did. My dear, I meant to tell you when I came in that I'm announcing my engagement to-day.

MRS. L.—Good gracious, to whom?

ETHEL—To Mr. Fanshaw.

MRS. L.—Good heavens. Allow me to condole— (*cross to FANSHAW*) I mean congratulate you, and so you're going to be married. (*ETHEL crosses up c. Shake hands*)

ETHEL—Oh, no, only engaged for a little while, just for fun. (*MRS. WOLTON enters L. 2 E.*)

MRS. WOLTON—(*L. c.*) Good morning, Ethel. I'm going to ask you to excuse Marion. She isn't seeing *any* one this morning. (*c.*) (*MRS. L. sits chair R., and FANSHAW R.*)

ETHEL—I understand—of course—give her my love and tell her not to mind—every one's on her side and,—she looked perfectly lovely. Tell her she had the prettiest wedding dress anyway of the season. (*She goes to kiss Mrs. WOLTON, who draws back. Both Mrs. W. and Mrs. L. are aghast at the flippant manner of ETHEL. ETHEL raises her eyebrows, shrugs her shoulders*) Good-by, good-by. Come along Fanshaw. (*Exit c. r.*)

FANSHAW—(*crossing to Mrs. W., c.*) Oh, Mrs. Wolton, don't mind Ethel. She doesn't mean what she sounds like. She never does mean what she sounds like. Besides, she's a little rattled this morning. You see she's engaged again.

MRS. W.—Engaged?

FANSHAW—Yes, not to Johnny. I'm it. (*ETHEL re-enters c.*)

ETHEL—Come along, Fanshaw.

FANSHAW—All right I'm coming. (*Takes up hat and papers. ETHEL motions for him to leave papers—he does so and exits c. with ETHEL.*)

MRS. L.—How is Marion?

MRS. W.—(*c.*) In the same extraordinary frame of mind—I'm afraid she'll be ill.

MRS. L.—You mean, so composed?

MRS. W.—Yes, so hard—she hasn't shed a tear—the only person she's at all human with is that poor creature upstairs. And you know she's sent for *him*.

MRS. L.—(*surprised*) She's going to see him?

MRS. W.—She insists upon doing so.

MRS. L.—I wonder why? I never want to see any of my husbands again—(*crosses to Mrs. W.*) after they've once disappointed me.

MRS. W.—I suspect—I don't know—Marion refuses to talk about it, but her sending for this Mrs.—er—Miss—er—dear me, I don't know what to call her—but you know who I mean—I think Marion has an idea she can help her to—er—(*she hesitates*)

MRS. L.—You don't mean to marry Fletcher? (*Mrs. WOLTON nods her head.*) (*Incredulously.*) She still wants to?

MRS. W.—Anything for her child's future.

MRS. L.—(*very seriously reflecting*) Well, I can understand that. (*she rouses herself and finishes in her old manner*) But my dear, I can sympathize with her too, poor thing. I know what's before her—you see both mine were brutes.

MRS. W.—(*rises, cross R. to Mrs. L.*) Will you mind if I say something very frank to you?

MRS. L.—(*tentatively*) Well—frank things are always disagreeable.

Mrs. W.—Anyway, I am going to run the risk. 'You know you are considered—rather—er——

Mrs. L.—I suppose you want to say heartless?

Mrs. W.—Oh, no!

Mrs. L.—Well—then frivolous——

Mrs. W.—Yes—perhaps—and—a few other things—but you aren't.

Mrs. L.—Yes, I am.

Mrs. W.—No, you're not.—These qualities are all only on the surface. (*both sit on sofa*). They are the rouge and powder of your character—underneath I believe you are plain and sincere.

Mrs. L.—(*laughing*) I'm not so mad about being plain, but sincere I would like to be.

Mrs. W.—It's your wretched luck in your married life that has made you what you are!

Mrs. L.—(*sincerely, with much feeling, and almost breaking down*) You're right. It was a case of hardening my heart and laughing in the world's face, or—or having it laugh in mine perhaps.

Mrs. W.—What you need now, as you did in the beginning is a *good* husband—like mine was.

Mrs. L.—Good men don't grow on bushes and besides, good men don't seem to care about me.

Mrs. W.—I know just the man, and I believe he's been in love with you for years, though he may not know it himself! (*Mrs. LORRIMER looks at her questioningly. Mrs. WOLTON goes to her and putting her arm around her neck, whispers in her ear*) I want you for a sister-in-law.

Mrs. L.—(*embarrassed, pleased*) Mrs. Wolton!

Mrs. W.—Call me "Laura," and I shall feel as if matters had progressed a little. (*Enter DAWSON—suddenly and unceremoniously c. Both women start slightly and exchange a quick covert meaning glance. Rise*)

DAWSON—Ah, Laura—I attended to that for you at once. Has she come?

Mrs. W.—Yes, she's upstairs.

DAWSON—Good. (*Mrs. L. coughs*) Mrs. Lorrimer—(*shaking her hand*) I have followed you here—they told me at your house.

Mrs. W.—(*rather hopefully*) You want to see Mrs. Lorrimer?

Mrs. L.—(*very quickly, aside to Mrs. WOLTON with humor*) Say "Emily"—that may help a little, too!

Mrs. W.—You want to see Emily?

DAWSON—(*a momentary surprise at the name*) Emily, sweet name—er—yes, if you will allow me, alone. (*goes R. and takes out handkerchief and mops brow*)

MRS. W.—Alone!—very well! (*aside to Mrs. L.*) I'd no idea it would come so soon. It must be *that*.

MRS. L.—(*blushing*) No, no, it's something else— (*believing though that it is*)

MRS. W.—(*still aside*) One thing delights me, you're as much in love as he is— (*aloud*) Good-bye, *Emily*. (U. C., *cross L. E.*)

MRS. L.—(*aloud, with emphasis*) Good-by, *Laura*! (MRS. WOLTON *exits L.*)

DAWSON—Mrs. Lorrimer— (*cross c.*) I want to speak to you on a matter of the greatest privacy.

MRS. L.—Yes. (*very quietly*)

DAWSON—You are the only woman in the world who can help me.

MRS. L.—(*seriously*) I consider that a true compliment, Mr. Dawson.

DAWSON—I hesitate because I do not know if I have the right to ask you to share my secret with me.

MRS. L.—As far as I am concerned, I *give* you that right.

DAWSON—You will help me at no matter what inconvenience to yourself?

MRS. L.—Yes—but I may not—er—consider it an “inconvenience” to myself. (*smiling*)

DAWSON—Very well then—the terrible trouble of yesterday is not the only calamity that may happen to my sister and her daughter.

MRS. L.—(*rising—surprised, disappointed, but still affected seriously by his serious manner*) It is of them you wish to speak to me?

DAWSON—Yes.

MRS. L.—It is for them you wish my help?

DAWSON—Yes.

MRS. L.—(*with one sigh, dismisses her disappointment and holds out her hand—crosses to R. of table R.*) It is yours for the asking.

DAWSON—Thank you! (*presses her hand*) Mr. Wolton killed himself to escape being convicted of a crime. (*sits L. of table R.*)

MRS. L.—(*withdraws her hand slowly from his, and whispers in tremulous surprise and horror*) What!!!

DAWSON—He had misappropriated funds entrusted to his care, exposure became inevitable—you know the rest.

MRS. L.—But Marion, Mrs. Wolton?

DAWSON—They know nothing!

MRS. L.—Nothing! (*looks puzzled*) But how—

DAWSON—The night of the catastrophe Fletcher announced his engagement to Marion, and claimed his right to bear a share of the family's trouble. I took him at his word by ask-

ing him to come to the rescue of his future wife's name and honor with—money!

MRS. L.—And he did!

DAWSON—Yes,—willingly! He was splendid that night.

MRS. L.—That's why you suddenly became his champion!

DAWSON—Yes, I couldn't believe the tales against him, when he had proved his love for Marion by such a big act of generosity.

MRS. L.—He knows everything?

DAWSON—Everything, that same night.

MRS. L.—And he has never breathed a word?

DAWSON—That was only natural up to yesterday, but now—*(interrupted)*

MRS. L.—He doesn't threaten to tell?

DAWSON—He does, unless Marion marries him. He's mad about her. The good in him has loved her up to now, now it's the devil in him. He's not the same man!

MRS. L.—And what do you want me to do?

DAWSON—Advise me.

MRS. L.—*I?* Advise *you?*

DAWSON—Yes. Shall we tell Marion?

MRS. L.—About her father?

DAWSON—Yes.

MRS. L.—No, no! Not if we can help it!

DAWSON—But— *(interrupted)*

MRS. L.—And Fletcher must be paid every cent he gave.

DAWSON—Not easily done. Of course you will understand I have nothing, what I had went at the first, and I shall need all my income now for Laura and Marion.

MRS. L.—You will borrow this money in your name.

DAWSON—I have no security. *(a moment's pause, both think—rise)*

MRS. L.—Do you carry a life insurance? *(crosses L.)*

DAWSON—Yes, quite a heavy one.

MRS. L.—Why not borrow on your life insurance this sum?

DAWSON—*(pleased)* Of course, of course! What a fool I've been not to think of that! How clever you are! But again, it must be borrowed privately for many reasons. *(again a moment's pause, while both think)*

MRS. L.—*(showing decision and determination)* I think I know some one.

DAWSON—Who?

MRS. L.—Don't ask me till I've seen him and found out—I will go now—*(crossing up c.)*—at once, and make a beginning, and you must go to Fletcher and keep him from coming here.

DAWSON—That won't be necessary, for surely Marion wouldn't see him.

MRS. L.—On the contrary she has *sent* for him!

DAWSON—(*astonished*) She isn't still in love with him! I'll go to him and say I've come to talk business, I think that's the best way to put it.

MRS. L.—Yes, and now, go right away!

DAWSON—(*with a world of appreciation and sentiment in his voice and manner*) Without thanking you?

MRS. L.—Yes, please, because I don't want you to thank me in a hurry—I want you to take a good long time over it. (*a moment's pause, they look at each other.* DAWSON *seizes her hand half shamefacedly, and kisses it.*) (*He starts for hat, which he placed on table as he entered*)

MRS. L.—(*drawing him back—half shyly*) Oh—answer me just one question. . . .

DAWSON—A dozen.

MRS. L.—What have you—a nice man—I mean—a man like you. . . . (*Interrupted.*)

DAWSON—(*Interrupting*) What kind of a man?

MRS. L.—A “nice” man—you *are* a nice man, aren't you? (*Smiling sweetly and rather archly at him.*)

DAWSON—(*Embarrassed*) Well—I—I'm afraid I shall have to leave the answer with you—am I?

MRS. L.—Yes, I think you are—and why have you never married?

DAWSON—Well, you see, *some* people marry so often, some others of us don't marry at all, just to strike a sort of balance!

MRS. L.—(*Laughing*) That's mean of you to say to me! Come, answer my question honestly.

DAWSON—Well, I've only known one woman in the world who wouldn't bore me.

MRS. L.—There are such things as happy marriages, aren't there?

DAWSON—I should like to risk one, only— (*He hesitates and stops.*)

MRS. L.—This “one woman in the world?”

DAWSON—Oh, she's absurd, impossible!

MRS. L.—Why? . . .

DAWSON—She wants to divorce all her husbands.

MRS. L.—Well, but don't give her a chance!

DAWSON—Eh, what?

MRS. L.—Don't give her a chance—any reason.

DAWSON—By George! I never thought of that.

MRS. L.—(*delighted*) You stupid!

DAWSON—(*delighted*) Don't you know who I mean?

MRS. L.—(*Very self-consciously*) No—how should I?

DAWSON—Can't you guess?

MRS. L.—I don't want to guess, I want to know for *certain*.

DAWSON—You are “the only woman in the world!” (*He bows low before her, his R. arm bent, his hand on his chest.*)

MRS. L.—(*Takes his arm*) Well, I am ready to run the risk if you are. (MRS. L. and DAWSON cross R.) But now we mustn't lose any more time—take a cable car, I will, it'll be quicker than a cab. Perhaps you won't approve of cable cars for me, though. They are the most emotional mode of convenience I've ever tried—This morning in two curves I sat in three men's laps!

DAWSON—*Ah, (Laughing).* Don't let those curves get to be a habit, or I'll sue the company for alienating your affections.

MRS. L.—(*Laughing*) Come! (*Takes his arm again and they meet MARION, who enters L.*)

MARION—(*As she comes*) Tired out, Emily? (DAWSON goes up stage to door.)

MRS. L.—Tired! I never felt so rested in all my life! I haven't tied up very many. (*With a look and gesture toward the table of presents.*) I've been interrupted—(X DAWSON up stage)—and now you must excuse me for a little while, but I'll come back and do some more. (MARION goes R. of table, MRS. L. up L. c.)

DAWSON—I'll go at once—(*To MARION*)—an errand for Emily—Mrs. Lorrimer. (*Emphasis on the name and a meaning look.*) Good-bye— (*Going.* Both women say "Good-bye," but MRS. L. follows him. MARION's back is turned. MRS. L. quickly gives DAWSON a large bunch of violets she carries in exchange for a small rose-bud he wears in his button-hole—He cannot get it into his coat. There is amused confusion, MARION turns and DAWSON quickly exits c.) (MRS. L. down L. of table.)

MARION—(*R. of table*) It's like the death of someone, isn't it? This is the death of my marriage, and these gifts are its clothes.

MRS. L.—Has—er—she gone?

MARION—No—she's waiting up in my room.

MRS. L.—What for?

MARION—(*quietly*)—I mean to make him marry her if I can here to-day. (c.)

MRS. L.—(*doubtfully*)—Do you think you can?

MARION—If he loves me I think so. I shall ask him to prove his love by doing the one honorable honest thing there is for him to do. (*to sofa*)

MRS. L.—You believe in this woman?

MARION—He has practically acknowledged that what she says is true.

MRS. L.—(*tenderly*)—And you dear, and your love— (*crosses to Marion.*) (*Interrupted*)

MARION—My love—for him. (*sits on sofa*) The blow he struck Jeannette fell on my heart and killed my love. A man

who would strike a woman will do most most anything, and think where he did it, and *why*? Because she was pleading and fighting for the rights of his child!

MRS. L.—I am glad dear you can take it so calmly.

MARION—(*calmly*) Oh, no, it isn't exactly that—I am reasonable, I see I've escaped a great misery and I'm grateful— (*enter servant*) But I suffer terribly, for the moment I close my eyes, I see only the dreadful scene of yesterday.

SERVANT—Mr. Fletcher, ma'am.

MRS. L.—Oh! He's missed him!

MARION—What? (*rises*) Who's missed who?

MRS. L.—Nothing. Nobody?

MARION—(*to servant*) Show him in, Howes. (*servant bows slightly and exits c.*)

MRS. L.—(*quickly*) Let me go the other way. (*going to L., reaches door*)

MARION—You're coming back?

MRS. L.—Yes. (*kisses MARION*)

MARION—What a sweet rose that is. (*touching DAWSON's rose in MRS. L's dress*)

MRS. L.—Yes, it's the loveliest rose I've ever seen. (*exit L. quickly as enter FLETCHER, c.*)

FLETCHER—(*speaking seriously but pleasantly, evidently expecting that everything is to be made all right between them*) Thank you for sending for me, but I would have come without your message!

MARION—(*looks at him, surprised at his tone. Speaks quietly*) Jeannette is upstairs waiting.

FLETCHER—(*starts, his whole manner changes, he realizing now that he has to fight for what he wants and against what he doesn't want*) Why?

MARION—I've promised her you shall marry her, if I can make you.

FLETCHER—You can't. No, no, Marion. (*pleading*) You won't throw me over for yesterday. I lost my temper I know, and I'm sorry for it, but I love you— (*interrupted*)

MARION—(*interrupting*) Prove it by doing what I ask.

FLETCHER—(*angry*) Never! (*goes R.*)

MARION—(*follows him*) If you make the reparation there is in your power, it would save you from being utterly contemptible in my eyes!

FLETCHER—*You say that!!!*

MARION—Yes, will you do what I ask?

FLETCHER—(*angry*) No!

MARION—(*angry*) Then I do right to despise you! (*down L.*)

FLETCHER—No, because it is *my love for you* that keeps me

back. (MARION *laughs a bitter satirical laugh*) I will marry only *you*!

MARION—Me! Ha! (*laughs again—crosses R.*)

FLETCHER—(*angrily—close to her*) And I will marry you.

MARION—No, you'll not! (*faces him*)

FLETCHER—I will force you to marry me.

MARION—How dare you to take that tone with me!

FLETCHER—I dare more than that.

MARION—(*goes to bell R.*) Take care or I'll have the servants turn you out of the house! (FLETCHER *laughs an ironical laugh*) Will you marry Jeannette Gros!

FLETCHER—(*more angry*) No! (*he follows her*) And I won't leave this house, either. (*takes her hand*)

MARION—Don't touch me!

FLETCHER—I won't leave the house because it's *mine*. And so will *you* be!

MARION—No!

FLETCHER—Yes you will, because I'll buy you with your father's reputation!

MARION—With what!

FLETCHER—With your father's good name.

MARION—You—scoundrel. (c.)

FLETCHER—We are well mated, for you are the daughter of one! (MARION *immediately touches the bell.*) (*Bell is heard ringing in the distance*) You had better dismiss the servant when he comes, I am sure you would rather he didn't hear all I have to say.

MARION—(*almost under her breath*) You cannot injure my father!

FLETCHER—Ask your uncle, Mr. Dawson! (MARION *looks up questioningly, as if she suddenly remembered something*) (*Servant enters c.*)

MARION—Ask Mrs. Wolton to please come here at once.

SERVANT—Yes, m'm. (*crosses room and exits L. 2 E.*)

FLETCHER—You remember the night of your fancy dress ball and your father's—death— (*He pauses—MARION doesn't answer, but looks troubled*) He took his life to save it from being—disgraced, because he was a *thief*!

MARION—Stop! (*she draws herself up and looks FLETCHER in the face. He stops. She goes to door L., opens it. He goes R.*) (*Enter L. MRS. WOLTON, a little frightened. MARION takes her hand and leads her down stage L.*) (*MRS. W. sees FLETCHER, but does not bow. FLETCHER bows. MARION takes MRS. WOLTON's hand and the two women stand L. c., facing FLETCHER who stands R. c.*)

MARION—You repeat, if you dare, the vile slander of my father!

MRS. W.—Your father?

FLETCHER—All that I said is true and more!

MRS. W.—What is true? What did he say? (*a pause*)
(FLETCHER remains doggedly silent)

MARION—Ah! You daren't repeat it before my mother!
(FLETCHER sneers) You know she would prove the lie in your face! Did you think you would frighten me into marrying you! Do you think a man with a reputation like yours, could injure the reputation of a man like my father, loved by everyone!

FLETCHER—And who cheated those very people who loved him—that's only what I did. He was no better than I—
(MRS. WOLTON makes a movement and an effort to interrupt him)

MARION—(to MRS. WOLTON) Let him finish, mother.
(holding her back)

FLETCHER—He left you both beggars, and robbed his own sister besides.

MRS. W.—*It is not true!*

MARION—(not believing him) How is it, then, that we have everything, everything we could wish for! How is it we have lived in our old home, lived our old life, if we were beggars!

FLETCHER—How?—thanks to my money, I've paid for it all!
(MARION opens her lips to speak, but cannot; a short pause)

MRS. W.—You! (MARION stops her with her hand on her arm.) (MARION and MRS. W. cross to sofa L.)

FLETCHER—(quietly) It is true! This is my house you're in! (*A pause—the two women are stunned, speechless, unable to comprehend and believe, yet unable to contradict*)
(Re-enter DAWSON, C.)

FLETCHER—Ah! (*Relieved as DAWSON is his proof.*) (DAWSON looks from one person to the other, realizes the situation. He looks a little frightened at the two women) (*An awkward moment's pause*) Question him if you doubt my word.

MARION—My father! Is what he says true? (*The women are afraid to question*)

DAWSON—(to FLETCHER) Have you told them?

FLETCHER—The truth? *Yes!*

DAWSON—(to FLETCHER) Your reason?

FLETCHER—I didn't come here to do it, she made me angry. She drove me to it.

MARION—(in a hard, tuneless voice) He says my father was not honest—is that true?

DAWSON—(answers with difficulty) Yes. (*A sob comes into MARION's throat and she almost breaks down, but she at once controls herself*)

MARION—He says his money has been supporting us since—since—

DAWSON—(to FLETCHER—A manly way to put it!

FLETCHER—(*cross L.*) (*Bursting out again*)—I wanted you to feel an obligation to me—I don't want to lose you.—You loved me yesterday, if you were once bound to me, you'd love me again—you can't change like that over night.

MARION—If yesterday had left any love in my heart for you, you would have destroyed it by what you have done to-day.

MRS. W.—(*who has gained control of herself*) But I don't understand how it was his money—

DAWSON—(*interrupts*) At the time of your husband's death a large sum of money was needed to keep his wrong doing from being made public. I took Fletcher into my confidence, and he lent us this sum.

MARION—You should have *told* me.

DAWSON—I wanted to save you.

MARION—No! no! it was placing me in a terribly false position. It was placing all of us! Well, *I* take the debt now on *my* shoulders! Between us three we will manage to pay it up in time—I am ready to give up the rest of my life to it. (*cross R. to FLETCHER*) Don't be afraid, you will be paid!

FLETCHER—And you still persist in your refusal to marry me?

MARION—Yes! Yes! Yes!! A thousand times now more than ever.

FLETCHER—And do you think all those years you are trying to scrape up the money I'll hold my tongue? I don't care about the money, I only care about you.—If I can't have you, do you think I'm going to accept the disgrace you helped heap upon me yesterday? Not I, if I know it! Throw me over and I'll make public your father's record—every dishonest bit of it! (*strikes table*)

MRS. W.—(*cries out*) No! No! (*crosses to DAWSON*)

DAWSON—You dare threaten?

MARION—No, no! He can't mean it.

MRS. W.—(*taking DAWSON's arm*) No, no! He wouldn't bring this disgrace upon us! What good would it do him?

FLETCHER—Then persuade her to marry me.

DAWSON—No. Rather the disgrace!

MARION—(*down R. to FLETCHER*) I never thought I would humble myself before you, but I do, now, and I beg you for the love you say you have for me, spare the name of a man, who at least never harmed you! Don't dishonor my father's memory. Isn't it enough revenge for you that my mother and I know it! (*with tears.*) (*FLETCHER is a little affected, but DAWSON does not see this and interrupts. He pulls MARION away from before FLETCHER*)

DAWSON—No—I won't have you pleading to him! (*Places her to L. and MARION puts arms about her mother.*)

FLETCHER—I know who I have to thank for all this—Rhodes!

MARION—There is no need to mention his name. (*Arms about her mother*)

FLETCHER—Isn't there! It was he who brought Jeanette here—it was he we both have to thank for yesterday's ordeal.

MARION—(*to* DAWSON *half-heartedly*) What? (*She places Mrs. W. on sofa*)

FLETCHER—(*R.*) You didn't believe me when I told you of your father! But this is as true as that was. And the night you promised to marry me, Rhodes threatened to do this very thing.

MARION—(*L.*) It isn't possible! He wouldn't have submitted me to yesterday's humiliation!

FLETCHER—How else could she—living quietly in a little town in Switzerland—know of our affairs here?

DAWSON—(*C.*) I confess Rhodes tried to prejudice me, but I was too much impressed with Fletcher's generosity.

FLETCHER—That money was nothing. I'd do it all over again to-morrow if Marion would only marry me.

MARION—Douglas tried to influence me, too.

FLETCHER—He wants you himself, that's why!

MARION—(*in despair*) Then I have no one—no friend to believe in! Not even you, Uncle Fred, for you should have told me about my father in the beginning. (*After FLETCHER has crossed, DAWSON goes up R. of L.*)

FLETCHER—(*crosses to* MARION) You have me!

MARION—Oh! Can't I make you understand, you least of all! (*SERVANT enters C. and announces—"Mrs. LORRIMER—Mr. RHODES."* *Those on the stage look up surprised*)

MRS. W.—Oh! this is more than I will bear! Mr. Rhodes, I must beg you to excuse us.

DOUGLAS—To excuse you?

MRS. L.—I have brought Mr. Rhodes— (*interrupted*)

MRS. W.—Then, I must ask you to take him away if he is unwilling to leave without you!

DAWSON—No, Laura, wait— (*interrupted*)

MARION—Mother is right. It should have been enough for Mr. Rhodes to have witnessed our humiliation yesterday. It is adding another insult for him to come here to-day.

MRS. L.—Marion, you don't know what you're saying—

DOUGLAS—(*stops Mrs. LORRIMER*) No! Miss Wolton is doubtless right— (*movement from MARION*) you did not tell me Mr. Fletcher was here, or I shouldn't have been persuaded to come. I prefer to go—

MRS. L.—No, not without my telling why you came.

DOUGLAS—No, I must ask you to keep the reason entirely to yourself—and Mr. Dawson. (*stars to go*)

DAWSON—(*stops him*) Not yet. I understand now why you

have come with Mrs. Lorrimer. It is not fair that your reason for coming should not be known.

FLETCHER—We know it, Miss Wolton has sufficiently explained. His presence here at this moment is only another insult.

DOUGLAS—Oh, you wish me to go? (*Mrs. L. begins to cross to R. back of DOUGLAS to R. of table*) That puts another color on the matter. I am at a loss to imagine how Mrs. Wolton could accuse me of the sentiments she did. I will stay and wait for an explanation from her.

MARION—I will give it to you if you will excuse me for a moment. (*going. Mrs. L. has crossed to R. of table R.*)

DAWSON—(*meeting her*) What are you going to do?

MARION—Bring her here—she is in my room—

FLETCHER—(*uneasy*) Jeannette.

MARION—(*ignoring FLETCHER, speaks to DAWSON in reply to FLETCHER's question*) She will tell us who brought her to New York, and that will answer—Mr. Rhodes. (*she exits L. 3.*)

FLETCHER—(*to DAWSON*) I refuse to remain to see this woman. (*up c.—takes his hat*)

DAWSON—I have no wish to detain you—but kindly give your address that I may communicate with you.

FLETCHER—My bankers you know, that is all that is necessary, as I shall very likely sail—what day is this?

DAWSON—Friday.

FLETCHER—(*bitterly*) Oh, yes, of course, my wedding day was on Thursday! I think I shall sail in to-morrow's steamer. (*up c.*) (*MARION re-enters L. Sees FLETCHER going, her voice stops him*)

MARION—You are going—wait. This gentleman has asked me a question, which I think you can answer for me, by answering a question of mine to you. How did you know of my marriage to—of my marriage of yesterday?

JEANNETTE—From a friend who wrote me and sent me the newspapers.

MARION—(*meaningly*) A man or woman friend?

JEANNETTE—A woman!

MARION—(*starts—it is the first shock of doubt she has had*) Douglas Rhodes had nothing to do with your appearance yesterday in the church?

DOUGLAS—(*R. C.*) (*Astonished—hurt*) You thought that?

JEANNETTE (*L. C.*) Oh no, Miss Wolton, he had nothing in the world to do with it.

MARION—(*stands up as if shot, her face full of shame and grief—turns slowly toward DOUGLAS, bows her head, half whispers*) I beg your pardon.

DAWSON—(*to FLETCHER*) You see you were wrong, Mr. Fletcher.

FLETCHER—Possibly. Good-bye.

MRS. W.—And our secret, my husband's— (hesitates, searching for a word—does not finish)

FLETCHER—Oh, I was only trying to bully your daughter into marrying me—a drowning man, you know—I thought I could make her love me again if I once had a good chance—that's all. Well—I've bought lots of pleasure at the cost of other people's, now I'm going to pay my debt I suppose with some misery on my own account but—well,—I shan't disturb Wolton's memory. (MRS. WOLTON whispers aloud to herself involuntarily—"Thank God!" FLETCHER continues speech) Because, because— (a sob comes in his throat) I can't help it, I still love his daughter. (after a long look at MARION, exits c.) (MARION has turned from DOUGLAS and listened to the end of FLETCHER's speech. As he goes, JEAN involuntarily seizes MARION's hand. MARION frees herself from JEANNETTE with an encouraging look at her, and follows FLETCHER out c.) (JEAN up L. c. a little, watching for MARION)

MRS. L.—Well, bad as he is, there is something about that man that takes right hold of me. (to DAWSON) It's lucky I've fallen in love with you or I might have had one more inning in the divorce club.

DAWSON—I'm only afraid there's a little danger of you trying it again, anyway.

MRS. L.—With you? Oh, no! The day we are married I'm going to begin writing letters to the newspapers in favor of abolishing the institution.

MARION—(enters c., down c. JEANNETTE goes to her quickly, calm and hopefully) Go to him, he is waiting. (JEAN gives an exclamation of emotional relief and joy) Be tactful, he wants to sail on to-morrow's steamer—don't . . . (interrupted)

JEANNETTE—I understand—he shall sail alone, if he will only leave his name behind for my boy.

MARION—That he will do—he said so. (as MARION turns, JEANNETTE takes her hand, turns and leaves the room)

MRS. L.—(L. c.) (crosses to MARION) Now, Marion, I want you to know why Douglas came. (music cue)

DOUGLAS—(rises, comes c.) Please— (he shakes his head)

DAWSON—But she *must* know some time.

DOUGLAS—Not before me.

DAWSON—Have you forgotten, Marion, our debt to Fletcher?

MARION—(realizes what it is) (to DOUGLAS) You would—Oh no, rather leave the debt with him to repay.

DOUGLAS—Why?

MARION—Because I owe you now more than I can ever repay, for the wonderful friendship you have given me all my life! I haven't the right to accept anything more from you.

DOUGLAS—Let me be the judge of that—

MARION—Still after all that's gone by you don't hate me?

DOUGLAS—(*forgetting himself*) Hate you? No. I—
(MARION crosses to sofa, sits. MRS. L., as he begins to speak, has touched DAWSON'S arm meaningly. DAWSON moves quickly and softly to DOUGLAS, and with a quiet, soft, firm touch on his arm, stops him before he can say "I love you.")

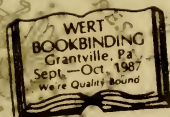
DAWSON—(*aside to DOUGLAS*) Wait—trust to me who love you both, and wait.

DOUGLAS—(*to MARION*) You'll leave the debt with me?

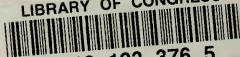
MARION—Yes! (MRS. L., MRS. W. and DAWSON all exchange happy, hopeful glances. DOUGLAS and MARION look at each other)

CURTAIN





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